

**Annual Report of the
Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan
2006 – 2007**



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SASKATCHEWAN, CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER OF SASKATCHEWAN.

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OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

July 26, 2007

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
129 Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0B3

Honourable Speaker:

Pursuant to section 286.1 of *The Election Act, 1996*, I have the distinct privilege of presenting the Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

This Annual Report highlights office activities for the period April 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jean Ouellet".

Jean Ouellet
Chief Electoral Officer
Encl.

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It is a distinct honour and pleasure that I publish this Annual Report for the period April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007.

The Chief Electoral Officer, as an independent Officer of the Legislative Assembly, must possess neutrality, integrity, and be worthy of the trust of all the components of the voting public and political entities. The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer strives to achieve excellence in its administration and reaches this goal through the optimal use of the resources made available to it. The Chief Electoral Officer's role is to strengthen the Office's mission, uphold its values and enhance its vision, while remaining accountable for its performance. The Office must possess short, medium and long-term priorities. Furthermore, both the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public need adequate information about the Office's goals and they must be able to measure the Office's achievements.

To that end, the Office has been completing anything left over from the "short-term priorities" and working through the "medium-term priorities" identified in the *Strategic Plan 2005-2011*, issued in June 2005.

This report is the Office's second "Report Card" on how well the Office has progressed and where more attention needs to be paid.

The ultimate success of the Office may be achieved through a renewed partnership with legislators, political entities, and the electorate while at the same time maintaining or even strengthening the independence of the Office.

As I look back over the year I see many accomplishments such as returning officer appointments made by the Chief Electoral Officer based on merit, improvements made to manuals for returning officers and poll officials, improvements to the training of returning officers and the new Elections Saskatchewan Permanent Register of Eligible Electors (ESPREE) application which was piloted in the recent Martensville by-election.

Looking ahead to the upcoming year, and the likelihood of a general election, as per media reports, I see the expansion of the many pilot projects introduced in the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election, and fine-tuned in the Martensville by-election, being introduced across the province. Further efforts regarding youth and Aboriginal voters are also in the planning stages.

Voting must also be made more accessible to all Saskatchewan electors. Through its reporting function, the Chief Electoral Officer must recommend to the Members of the Legislative Assembly various ways of making the voting process in Saskatchewan more user-friendly and more accessible. The Office needs to revisit and re-evaluate existing processes to determine why they are needed, how to better implement them and how to measure their success and effectiveness. This report adds eleven new recommendations as well as the review of recommendations from the last two annual reports.

Collectively we can create a made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the needs of all our stakeholders.

Finally, I also wish to thank my staff for their dedicated work in carrying out and implementing the Strategic Plan for Elections Saskatchewan, the implementation of the amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, as well as the administration of the Weyburn-Big Muddy and Martensville by-elections and preparations for the pending general election.

Jean Ouellet
Chief Electoral Officer
July 2007

From April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007 the Office, in addition to annual operational activities, undertook preparations to develop and implement strategic initiatives, which were outlined in the *Strategic Plan 2005-2011*, and expanded upon in the last two annual reports.

This Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer outlines and discusses strategic initiatives and Office activities over a 12-month period including implementation of the amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, as well as the administration of the Weyburn-Big Muddy and Martensville by-elections and the preparations for the next general election.

The sections on the Mandate of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and Planning Overview are detailed first. The details on progress on all short-term and medium-term strategic initiatives follow.

A section on annual Elections Saskatchewan activities outlines annual activities with respect to constituency returning officers, registered political parties including registration, potential candidates and annual financing reporting, the political contributions tax credit system, annual/campaign period reporting, *Detail of Expenditures*, statutory compliance assistance and public disclosure.

The section on Operational Expenditures outlines expenditures of the central elections administration as well as the decentralized expenditures of the constituency returning officer. The 2006-2007 Financial Statement of Elections Saskatchewan and notes are also included as an Appendix.

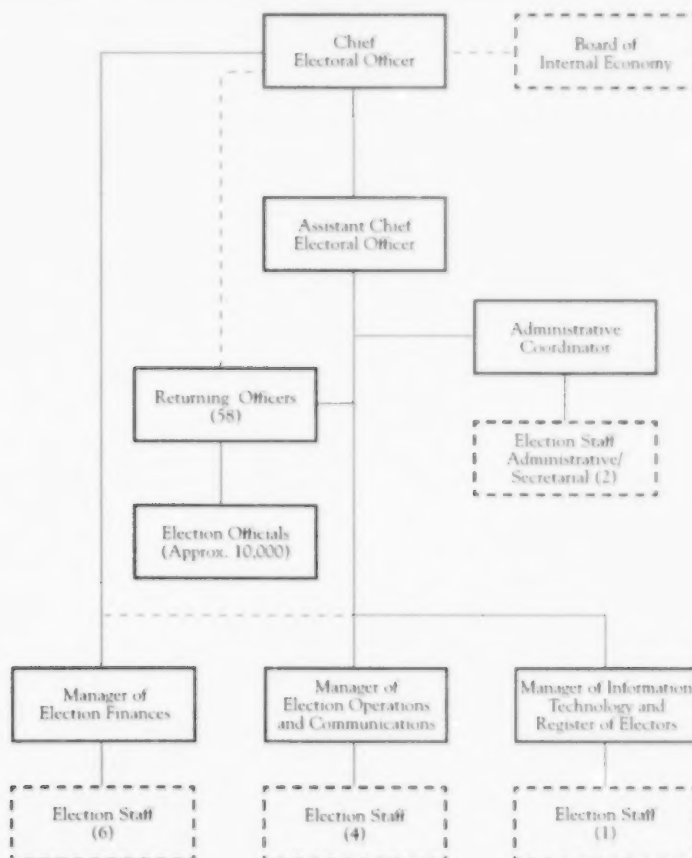
Liaison outlines Office deliberations with federal, provincial, and territorial election officials, as well as cooperation in both the local and international spheres including the Council On Governmental Ethics Laws, the Conference of Canadian Election Officials, the National Register of Electors Advisory Committee, the Electoral Technology Accord, Educational Liaison and Ongoing Liaison.

The Report concludes with new recommendations for future amendments to *The Elections Act, 1996*, as well as a review of previous year's recommendations, with updates.

III. MANDATE OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

The Office is a non-partisan body charged with the mandate of directing and supervising the administrative and financial conduct of provincial electoral events. The Chief Electoral Officer, appointed by resolution of the Legislative Assembly, directs the Office and its activities. Under *The Election Act, 1996*, the Office is responsible for the administration of provincial elections, by-elections, enumerations (other than during a writ of election) and provincial elections finances. The Office is additionally charged with the administration of the province's political contributions tax credit disclosure system under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. The Office periodically administers and oversees referenda and plebiscites under *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act* and time votes under *The Time Act*. The Office's mandate is supported by the contributions of administrative and professional personnel as detailed in the organizational chart below.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART - ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN



The Election Act, 1996, places a duty on the Office to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents and business managers to ensure compliance with financial transparency and disclosure requirements of *The Election Act, 1996*. In fulfillment of this duty, the Office publishes guidance documentation to assist chief official agents and business managers in discharging their administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, in compiling requisite support documentation, and in undertaking annual financial disclosure in accordance with *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. The Office also conducts electoral educational workshops throughout the province to ensure effective execution of election activities.

The Office is responsible for assessing and reimbursing, where applicable, election expenses paid from the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Office has established a system of financial review to certify public reimbursement of election expenses through the examination and audit of registered political parties' and candidates' expense returns and requisite disclosure documentation. To promote transparency, expense return details are published and tabled in the Legislative Assembly for public review.

The Office is responsible for investigating suspected or alleged contraventions of *The Election Act, 1996*, as the Chief Electoral Officer considers necessary. The Office, in determining if an offence has been committed, considers whether the overall purposes, policy rationales and/or legislative intentions of *The Election Act, 1996* were violated in the circumstances at issue. Where the Chief Electoral Officer determines that the alleged contravention is supported on the investigative evidence, the Office forwards the matter to the Department of Justice for prosecutorial review.

The Chief Electoral Officer reports annually to the Board of Internal Economy on budgetary matters and to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on matters related to *The Election Act, 1996*. In addition to such annual reporting, the Chief Electoral Officer prepares and tables reports in the Legislative Assembly on all electoral specific activities. Provincial election results are published in the *Statement of Votes (Volume I)* and its complementary volume the *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer Campaign Contributions and Expenditures (Volume II)*. Administrative and financial reporting of constituency by-elections is encapsulated in individual statement of by-election reports.

The Office maintains a public relations program to raise political stakeholder and public awareness of important aspects of the Office's mandate, to respond to public enquires and to liaise with registered political parties, candidates and their chief official agents and business managers.

IV. PLANNING OVERVIEW

In January 2005 the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, embarked on a strategic planning exercise. The results of the planning process were as follows.

- **Three time frames** were set for activities:
 - Short-Term Activities to be completed by April 1, 2006;
 - Medium-Term Activities to be completed by April 1, 2007; and
 - Long-Term Activities to be completed by April 1, 2011.
- **Elections Saskatchewan's Mission** was agreed upon:
 - To ensure the right of the people of Saskatchewan to participate freely in honest, open and fair electoral events, and to encourage the involvement of political parties, candidates and electors by raising their awareness and understanding of electoral processes that are transparent, efficient and accessible.
- **Elections Saskatchewan's Values** were agreed upon as follows:
 - To be **independent and non-partisan**;
 - To have **integrity**;
 - To be **open and transparent** in all activities;
 - To be **accountable** to electors and the members of the Legislative Assembly;
 - To be **efficient** in designing processes and ensuring financial accountability;
 - To be **effective** in electoral event delivery procedures and operations;
 - To be **innovative, creative and flexible** in delivering the present and preparing for the future;
 - To be **consultative** with all our stakeholders;
 - To be **professional** in all our activities; and
 - To create a **cooperative** working environment and encourage all of the election team to work together and to work with their stakeholders and partners.
- **Elections Saskatchewan's Vision** was also agreed upon:
 - A made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the needs of all of our stakeholders.

Refer to www.elections.sk.ca for further information on Elections Saskatchewan's Mission and Values.

As in the 2005-2006 annual report, this year's annual report includes a measure of the Office's performance and will show whether or not the Office is meeting its objectives.

V. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

A. SHORT-TERM (BY APRIL 1, 2006) [WITH UPDATES]

(Repeated below from the 2005-2006 Annual Report with any appropriate updates in **bolded italics**)

1. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan should develop a comprehensive Change Management Strategy; this will encourage participation and commitment of the current staff, establish specific objectives, plans and measurable outcomes and gain support with other stakeholders. The following is a partial list of some of the things that should be included:

- (a) Presentation of this Strategic Plan to the Board of Internal Economy, the Legislature, and the all-party committee;
- (b) Publish and promulgate the Mission, Vision and Value documents developed in this Strategic Plan;
- (c) Consult actively with all stakeholders, about this Strategic Plan and other opportunities;
- (d) Consult actively with constituency returning officers and their election clerks; and
- (e) Involve Elections Saskatchewan headquarters staff in these consultations and presentations.

Accomplishments:

- (a) AND (b) STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2011, WHICH INCLUDED THE MISSION, VISION AND VALUE DOCUMENTS WAS DISTRIBUTED IN CD FORMAT TO THE:
 - MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY;
 - RETURNING OFFICERS; AND
 - REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY OFFICIALS.STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2011 WAS PUBLISHED ON THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE.
- (c) CONSULTED WITH REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

THE ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY, WHICH HAD BEEN ON HIATUS SINCE 2001, WAS REVIVED. THE COMMITTEE MET TWICE, ONCE IN NOVEMBER 2005 TO DISCUSS THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2011 AND THE THEN PENDING AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTION ACT, AND ONCE IN APRIL 2006 TO DISCUSS PREPARATIONS FOR THE PENDING BY-ELECTION IN WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY. IT IS OUR INTENTION TO FULLY UTILIZE THIS VEHICLE FOR COMMUNICATION MORE REGULARLY THAN IN THE PAST. THE OFFICE HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED ANOTHER MEETING FOLLOWING THE CURRENT ONGOING BY-ELECTION, SOMETIME IN THE FALL OF 2006. IT IS ALSO HOPED THAT THIS COMMITTEE WILL BE ABLE TO DISCUSS NEW ELECTORAL TECHNOLOGY, POSSIBLE CHANGES IN PROCEDURES, ETC. THE OFFICE BELIEVES THAT AN ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT FORUM TO DISCUSS ELECTORAL ISSUES WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE PROVINCE. TO THIS END A RECOMMENDATION TO FORMALIZE THE ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS ALSO INCLUDED IN THE SECTION OF THIS REPORT ENTITLED RECOMMENDATIONS - AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTION ACT, 1996.

-
- (d) COPIES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2011 WERE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL RETURNING OFFICERS AND THE STAFF OF THE OFFICE MET WITH ALL RETURNING OFFICERS ACROSS THE PROVINCE IN OCTOBER 2005 TO DISCUSS THE PLAN.
- (e) ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN HEADQUARTERS STAFF WERE INVOLVED IN THESE CONSULTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS.

Update: In November 2006 this committee met again to review the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election and be apprised of preparations for the Martensville by-election and the next general election. At the time of writing all newly appointed returning officers are being sent a copy of the Strategic Plan 2005-2011. At the time of writing there are plans for a September 2007 meeting of the advisory committee to further discuss preparations for the next general election.

2. CONDUCT A STRATEGIC IMPACT ANALYSIS OF BILL 119, AN ACT TO AMEND
THE ELECTION ACT, 1996

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan should conduct a Strategic Impact Analysis on the impact of the proposed revisions to *The Election Act, 1996*, on the organization; existing policies, procedures and guidelines; forms and other documents; and, day-to-day operations in both a non-election and election period. This will result in the development of action plans to ensure that the organization is prepared to implement the required changes, if required, prior to the next electoral event.

Accomplishments:

- THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER CONDUCTED A STRATEGIC IMPACT ANALYSIS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE ELECTION ACT, 1996.
- THE ENTIRE OFFICE PARTICIPATED IN A REVIEW OF THE ANALYSIS RESULTING IN AN ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE AMENDMENTS PRIOR TO THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION.
- THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTION ACT, 1996, WERE SHARED WITH RETURNING OFFICERS AND REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES IN MEETINGS IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2005, RESPECTIVELY.

No update required.

3. DEVELOP A STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH / COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan needs to develop an outreach/communications strategy to raise the awareness of the electorate, in general, in regards to their democratic rights in the electoral process. More specifically, strategies are required to improve the voter turnout amongst the youth (18 to 25 year olds) and the First Nations sectors of the electorate. In addition, an advertising strategy for the next general election should be developed.

Accomplishments:

- COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:

- WORK HAS BEGUN TO REVIEW THE ADVERTISEMENTS USED IN PAST ELECTIONS.
- IN THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION, RADIO ADVERTISEMENTS AND NEWS RELEASES ISSUED BY THE OFFICE WERE USED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Update: In the past few months the Office has reviewed its communications strategy and is revising it extensively. In past elections the Office had a series of five newspaper ads which were very legalistic and overly wordy. In discussion with our advertising agency we have reduced the series to four newspaper ads, simplified the text, made the design more visually appealing, expanded to youth oriented/entertainment/alternative newspapers in Regina and Saskatoon, and added radio advertising. We are exploring the use of a voter information guide to be placed as an insert in the youth oriented/entertainment/alternative newspapers.

- YOUTH SECTOR

- THE OFFICE WAS FORTUNATE IN OBTAINING THE SERVICES OF TWO COMMUNICATION INTERNS FOR THREE MONTHS FROM SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2005 AS PART OF THE CANADA WORLD YOUTH PROGRAM. SERHIY VAKULICH WAS FROM UKRAINE. LIAM O'LEARY WAS FROM NOVA SCOTIA VIA TORONTO WHERE HE IS ATTENDING UNIVERSITY.
- THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE INTERNS WAS TO:
 - (a) RESEARCH THE WEB SITES OF OTHER ELECTORAL JURISDICTIONS INCLUDING THOSE IN CANADA, UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA;
 - (b) RESEARCH THE ISSUE OF YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT;
 - (c) DRAFT A PROPOSAL FOR A YOUTH PORTION FOR THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE;
 - (d) WRITE A REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT YOUTH VOTING; AND
 - (e) AS A RESULT OF THEIR EFFORTS, A YOUTH SECTION WILL BE ADDED TO THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

Update: Advertising on radio stations across the province and in youth oriented/entertainment/alternative newspapers are being considered as a way to better reach the youth demographic.

At the time of writing a communications assistant has been hired for the summer to:

- Research the possibility of creating two youth liaison positions for the next general election;
- Update the work done by Canada World Youth students to create a "Youth Web site";
- Enhance the student brochure; and
- Provide general assistance regarding revisions to Web site content.

- FIRST NATIONS SECTOR

- THE OFFICE HAS BEGUN TO LOOK AT THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER PROGRAM USED BY ELECTIONS CANADA'S RETURNING OFFICERS IN THEIR PRE-ELECTION ACTIVITIES. THE OFFICE WILL BE LOOKING AT ADAPTING THIS PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST NATIONS AND YOUTH SECTORS.

Update: Advertising on Northern radio stations and in Aboriginal and youth oriented/entertainment/alternative newspapers are being considered as a way to better reach the Aboriginal demographic.

Our advertising agency was contracted in January to develop a proposal to increase First Nations and Métis participation in the next Provincial Election. The Office is currently considering the recommendations.

At the time of writing a communications assistant has been hired for the summer to do research regarding the possibility of creating two Aboriginal liaison positions for the next general election and create a brochure directed at Aboriginal voters.

- **WEB SITE**

- *AT THE ISSUANCE OF THE WRIT IN OCTOBER 2003, ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN LAUNCHED ITS WEB SITE, WHICH WAS VERY WELL RECEIVED ACROSS THE PROVINCE. SINCE THAT TIME SOME IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BASED ON FEEDBACK FROM VOTERS AND THE DESIRE TO MAKE ELECTION FINANCING MORE TRANSPARENT.*
- *A TOTAL REVAMP OF THE WEB SITE IS PLANNED PRIOR TO APRIL 1, 2007 IN ORDER TO MAKE IT MORE USER FRIENDLY.*
- *MORE WORK HAS TO BE DONE AFTER THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION TO EVALUATE THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY USED FOR THE BY-ELECTION AND TO EXPAND IT FOR USE AT A GENERAL ELECTION BUILDING IN SPECIFIC FIRST NATIONS AND YOUTH COMPONENTS.*

Update: At the time of writing the Office has begun working with the Web site contractor to make the current Elections Saskatchewan Web site more "User-friendly" and create an "Election Web site in waiting". The Office has a summer student building on the work of the two Canada World Youth Program interns from 2005 in order to add a youth section to the Elections Saskatchewan Web site.

4. CONDUCT A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS INTO THE AUTOMATION OF ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY PRODUCTS

Objectives:

Currently all of the electoral maps, street guides and poll keys are generated manually. The cartographers required to manually prepare these products are becoming a scarce resource and may not be available to meet future requirements. Elections Saskatchewan must determine the strategic alternatives and an implementation plan to resolving this issue as soon as possible in order to meet the target date of election readiness for April 1, 2007. Consideration should be given to conducting a pilot project of the solution(s) selected, preferably in high-growth constituencies, as a "proof of concept". The map products currently available will allow Elections Saskatchewan to meet any requirements for electoral events in the meantime.

Accomplishments:

- AN ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY IMPACT ANALYSIS STUDY WAS COMPLETED IN OCTOBER 2005. IN NOVEMBER 2005, THE MANAGER OF ELECTION OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ASSISTANT CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER TOOK PART IN AN ELECTORAL TECHNOLOGY ACCORD WORKSHOP ON ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY IN OTTAWA;
- AFTER THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION:
 - FURTHER FOLLOW-UP WITH INFORMATION SERVICES CORPORATION WILL TAKE PLACE; AND
 - PREPARATIONS WILL BEGIN FOR APPROXIMATELY 18 RETURNING OFFICERS TO BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER TO REVIEW THEIR POLLING DIVISION MAPS WHERE SOME POLLS HAVE EXPERIENCED LARGE POPULATION GROWTH.

Update: For staffing and financial reasons it was decided not to do a complete remapping of all 58 constituencies. Instead constituencies with the most residential growth since the last election were identified. In total five constituencies have been remapped and at the time of writing two more constituencies are in the process of re-mapping.

5. CONDUCT A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS INTO THE IMPACTS OF IMPLEMENTING A PERMANENT ELECTRONIC VOTER'S LIST

Objectives:

The second reading of Bill 119 contained an announcement that "One of the most significant recommendations of the committee was the development of a permanent electronic voter's list. Under the Bill, regulations will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a process to ensure that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voter's list."

This directive indicates that it would be prudent of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to commission an immediate study into the strategic impacts and options of developing a permanent electronic voter's list for Saskatchewan.

This study would have been recommended irrespective of Bill 119 being introduced because it is a key element that must be reviewed as part of the Chief Electoral Officer's efforts to modernize and renew electoral processes in the Province of Saskatchewan. The introduction, or studies in regards to the impacts of implementing automated registers of electors has been a major activity for most other electoral jurisdictions in Canada over the past ten years. Because of these activities, there is a wealth of information and experiences for Elections Saskatchewan to draw from in the conduct of this important study.

Accomplishments:

- ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN RECEIVED THREE GENEROUS OFFERS FOR THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF LIST OF ELECTORS SOFTWARE (FROM ELECTIONS ONTARIO, ELECTIONS BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ELECTIONS ALBERTA);

- A CONSULTANT WAS HIRED TO SURVEY THE THREE SYSTEMS AND TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION REGARDING WHICH SYSTEM BEST FIT SASKATCHEWAN'S NEEDS;
- AFTER AN EXTENSIVE FIELD APPLICATION SURVEY (NOVEMBER 2005) THE CONSULTANT RECOMMENDED ELECTIONS ALBERTA'S WEB-BASED ALBERTA REGISTER OF ELECTORS SYSTEM (AROES);
- THE OFFICE HAS ENGAGED THE SERVICES OF A SYSTEMS CONSULTING FIRM TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO AROES TO MAKE IT THE SASKATCHEWAN SPECIFIC ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PERMANENT REGISTER OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORS (ESPREE):
 - THE FIRM THAT THE OFFICE HAS ENGAGED IS THE ORIGINAL FIRM THAT DEVELOPED AROES AND HAS CUSTOMIZED THE SOFTWARE FOR ELECTIONS NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND ELECTIONS NUNAVUT;
 - THE SOFTWARE CHANGES RELATED TO THE LIST OF ELECTORS ARE EXPECTED TO BE OPERATIVE IN THE FALL OF 2006; AND
 - OTHER COMPONENTS ARE ANTICIPATED FOR A COMPLETION DATE IN EARLY 2007;
- THE OFFICE ANTICIPATES THE ENACTMENT OF REGULATIONS THAT WILL ALLOW THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER TO IMMEDIATELY COMMENCE THE PROCESS OF ENSURING THAT SASKATCHEWAN HAS A CURRENT AND ACCURATE VOTER'S LIST THAT WILL FACILITATE VOTING AND COMMUNICATIONS IN AN ELECTION IN A MUCH MORE MODERN AND EFFICIENT MANNER.

Update: See #3 of Medium-Term Initiatives.

6. CONDUCT A STRATEGIC STUDY TO IMPLEMENT A CONTACT CENTRE

Objectives:

This study is required to improve the effectiveness of communicating with stakeholders both in an electoral event and non-electoral event mode of operation. In past elections, all headquarters staff has been involved in the answering of all telephone calls, e-mail and other correspondence with stakeholders during an election. This was disruptive to the management of the electoral process and ineffective in meeting all of the demands for information. This initiative is operational in nature but is critical to freeing-up Elections Saskatchewan managers and staff to manage the successful conduct of the next general election while meeting the requirements for timely information from all stakeholders.

As well, the information collected on a day-to-day basis during an electoral event in regard to stakeholder queries will enable the management team at Elections Saskatchewan to be aware of stakeholder issues and take proactive steps to ensure those demands are being dealt with.

Accomplishments:

- A CONTACT CENTRE STRATEGY STUDY WAS COMPLETED BY A CONSULTANT IN SEPTEMBER 2005; AND
- WORK IS NEARING COMPLETION FOR A DRAFT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TO BE ISSUED IN THE FALL OF 2006.

Update: A request for proposal was issued in the Winter of 2007. A company was chosen and at the time of writing a scoping session between staff at the call centre and Elections Saskatchewan has taken place and further details, training etc. are being worked out.

7. CONDUCT AN ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

Objectives:

The current centralized and decentralized organizational structures and functions should be reviewed. This should be done after the other short-term strategic initiatives outlined above are completed because the outcomes of those studies could have major impacts on the functionality and structure of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Accomplishments:

- AN ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW TOOK PLACE. IT WAS DECIDED THAT NOW WAS NOT THE TIME TO MAKE ANY MAJOR CHANGES TO THE CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION (ANTICIPATED IN 2007).

No update required.

8. CONDUCT A REVIEW OF CURRENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Objectives:

The current policies, procedures and guidelines should be reviewed for opportunities for renewal/change or to fill gaps that may be identified. The first step should be to identify which ones should be reviewed immediately and which ones should be reviewed after the strategic initiatives identified above are completed.

Accomplishments:

- A REVIEW TOOK PLACE OF CURRENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES. AS A RESULT, A STANDARDIZED FORMAT FOR POLICIES WAS ADOPTED AND POLICIES ON MOBILE POLLS, ABSENTEE VOTING, ACCEPTABLE IDENTIFICATION, VOUCHING AND THE APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER WERE DEVELOPED. THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES WILL BE AN ONGOING PROJECT AS THE OFFICE STREAMLINES ITS TRAINING MATERIALS FOR RETURNING OFFICERS, ELECTION CLERKS AND OTHER POLL OFFICIALS.

Update: Further policies on vandalism or theft of signs, Elections Saskatchewan passwords, what constitutes an emergency under subsection 44(8) and list of electors guidelines (and accompanying forms) were developed in the past year. The policy on the appointment of returning officers by the Chief Electoral Officer was further refined in April of 2006. At the time of writing a Policy on Security procedures for "Form B" Ballots and a Policy on Reviews, Investigations and Prosecutions are being finalized.

9. IMPLEMENT AN ELECTIONS FINANCE REPORTING SYSTEM

Objectives:

Election expense reporting by political parties and candidates is a statutory requirement with specific time deadlines post election. Currently this is a manual paper-oriented process that is onerous for both those completing the documents and for Elections Saskatchewan to review. Automated tools should be developed that can be distributed to the business managers for candidates and the chief official agents for political parties. This would clarify the rules for reporting and simplify the preparation of these reports and facilitate the activity for everyone involved. This would also reduce the workload and time frames required for Elections Saskatchewan staff to review the reports (currently five to seven months elapsed time) and should lead to more timely reimbursement of elections expenses.

Accomplishments:

- A CONSULTANT HAS BEGUN TO ASSESS ELECTIONS CANADA'S ELECTION FINANCE REPORTING SYSTEM WITH THE HOPE OF DEVELOPING A SIMILAR SOFTWARE PROGRAM. MORE WORK IS PROGRESSING ON THIS PROJECT.

No update at this time. Limited Office resources did not allow anything further on this.

10. REVIEW AND UPDATE THE ELECTION READINESS PLAN

Objectives:

The review and updating of the Election Readiness Plan is a critical initiative that must continue in parallel with the conduct of the other strategic initiatives outlined above. Some of these strategic initiatives may have major impacts on the Election Readiness Plan, but other situations may occur which necessitate changes or additions to the Plan as well. The axiom that "the world doesn't stop while you plan" applies to this activity.

Accomplishments:

(a) ADMINISTRATION OF THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION

UPON RECEIPT OF A SUBSECTION 40(1) NOTICE UNDER THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT, 2005, THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE, INFORMS THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL OF ANY MEMBER VACANCY AND MUST, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT, 2005, HOLD A BY-ELECTION TO FILL A VACANCY WITHIN SIX MONTHS AFTER A SEAT BECOMES VACANT AND NOTICE OF THAT VACANCY HAS BEEN GIVEN. ONCE THE MEMBER FOR WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY TENDERED HER RESIGNATION ON FEBRUARY 28, 2006 PREPARATIONS FOR A BY-ELECTION WENT INTO HIGH GEAR.

- BY-ELECTIONS ARE A USEFUL TIME TO TEST OUT POSSIBLE INNOVATIONS OR PILOT PROJECTS ON A SMALL SCALE.

SOME NEW INITIATIVES FOR THE BY-ELECTION INCLUDE THE USE OF:

- POSTERS TO RECRUIT ENUMERATORS;
- PRE-WRIT ACTION PLANS BY THE RETURNING OFFICER;
- AN ACCESS-BASED ELECTION DAILY OPERATIONAL PLAN (ADAPTED FROM ANOTHER JURISDICTION);
- SENDING NEW RELEASES TO THE MEDIA;
- RADIO ADVERTISING;
- CANADA POST ELECTRONIC STATEMENT OF MAIL TO FORWARD ABSENTEE BALLOT KITS TO ABSENTEE VOTERS IN CANADA AS WELL AS FOR OUTSIDE OF CANADA;
- VOTER INFORMATION CARDS (VICs) WITH POLL LOCATION AND ADVANCE POLL LOCATION MAILED BY CANADA POST TO ALL VOTERS WHO HAD BEEN ENUMERATED IN ALL REGULAR POLLS. THE VICs WERE MAILED PRIOR TO THE START OF THE ADVANCE POLLS;
- MAGNIFYING GLASSES AT THE POLL FOR VOTERS WITH SOME DEGREE OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT;
- CARDBOARD BALLOT BOXES;
- LONGER STANDARDIZED OFFICE HOURS FOR RETURNING OFFICE;
- INTERNET ACCESS FOR RETURNING OFFICE;
- MOBILE POLLS WHICH VISIT SEVERAL SMALL PERSONAL CARE HOMES IN THE CONSTITUENCY (PREVIOUSLY ONLY LARGE PERSONAL CARE FACILITIES HAD THEIR OWN HALF DAY OR FULL-DAY POLL); AND
- POST-ELECTION DEBRIEFING WITH RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTION CLERK (VIA WRITTEN REPORT AND IN-PERSON).

(b) ADMINISTRATION OF THE MARTENSVILLE BY-ELECTION

UPON RECEIPT OF A SUBSECTION 40(1) NOTICE UNDER THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT, 2005, THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE, INFORMS THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL OF ANY MEMBER VACANCY AND MUST, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT, 2005, HOLD A BY-ELECTION TO FILL A VACANCY WITHIN SIX MONTHS AFTER A SEAT BECOMES VACANT AND NOTICE OF THAT VACANCY HAS BEEN GIVEN. ONCE THE MEMBER FOR MARTENSVILLE PASSED AWAY ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2006 PREPARATIONS FOR A BY-ELECTION WENT INTO HIGH GEAR.

SOME NEW INITIATIVES FOR THIS BY-ELECTION INCLUDED THE USE OF:

- THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PERMANENT REGISTER OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORS (ESPREE) SOFTWARE - PHASE I - AN ELECTRONIC LIST OF ELECTORS BASED ON ELECTIONS ALBERTA'S ALBERTA REGISTER OF ELECTORS SYSTEM (AROE). THE WEB-BASED SOFTWARE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR EIGHT DATA ENTRY OPERATORS (DEOs) TO DATA ENTER 10,000+ ELECTORS IN FOUR DAYS (SEVEN OF EIGHT DEOs WORKED FROM HOME);

- New “re-designed” newspaper ads; and
- A manual for deputy returning officers (DROs) and poll clerks was developed for the first time since 1995. Suggestions from the DROs and poll clerks in the by-election resulted in further improvements for the “final” version to be used at the next general election.

(c) PREPARATIONS FOR THE TWENTY-SIXTH PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION

- REPLACEMENT OF MATERIALS AND FORMS WHICH WERE CHANGED DUE TO THE AMENDMENTS PROCLAIMED ON MARCH 22, 2006;
- SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES INCLUDED THE PROCEDURES FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICERS BY THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER THROUGH A MERIT-BASED PROCESS;
- MORE WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE AS FOLLOWS:
 - TRAINING FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVIEWING POLLING DIVISIONS IN APPROXIMATELY 18 CONSTITUENCIES SCHEDULED FOR FALL 2006;
 - THE RESULTING REVISIONS TO MAPS, POLL KEYS AND URBAN STREET INDEXES FOR THE 18 CONSTITUENCIES;
 - CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICER TRAINING. MOST CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTION CLERKS WILL RECEIVE A FULL THREE-DAY TRAINING SESSION PRIOR TO THE WRIT OF ELECTION. THE SESSIONS WILL BE OFFERED IN SPRING 2007 IN BOTH REGINA AND SASKATOON FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THOSE ATTENDING.
- THE THREE-DAY TRAINING SESSION WILL REVIEW CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICER MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES, ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION, PERSONNEL TRAINING, AND OUTREACH WITH REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES, CANDIDATES AND THE ELECTORATE. SPECIFIC CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES REVIEWED INCLUDED:
 - SELECTING, APPOINTING AND TRAINING ELECTION OFFICIALS (i.e., ENUMERATORS, DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICERS, POLL CLERKS, ETC.);
 - PLANNING AND CONDUCTING ENUMERATIONS, INCLUDING PRODUCING A CONSTITUENCY VOTER'S LIST;
 - DISTRIBUTING AND RECEIVING CANDIDATE NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION FINANCE DOCUMENTATION;
 - PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING ADVANCE POLLING AND ELECTION DAY VOTING; AND
 - COMMUNICATING WITH POLITICAL STAKEHOLDERS, THE PUBLIC AND THE MEDIA.

Update: Preparations for the next general election began over three years ago as a result of the thin majority in the Legislative Assembly. All forms and materials were re-ordered, printed and packed in the event of an election call. As a result of the amendments, which

received Royal Assent on May 27, 2005 and which were proclaimed March 22, 2006, there were many changes to existing forms. All boxes of previously packed election materials had to be unpacked and re-packed with the replacement of the obsolete forms. Enumeration and absentee voting materials were distributed to all returning officers in May, 2007. See below for more details of the preparations for the next general election.

RECRUITMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS

- One of the major recent amendments to The Elections Act, 1996 was the change from returning officers being identified and appointed by Executive Council to being recruited and appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer, based on merit. Policies, procedures and forms were developed using background materials and examples from Elections Manitoba, Elections British Columbia and Elections Quebec.
- After completing an application form, short-listed applicants were directed to take a "Prevue test". This test, taken on a home computer, identified possible areas where the skills of the applicant were above or below the benchmark set by Elections Saskatchewan for the position. An individualized print-out was produced for each short-listed applicant identifying possible questions with respect to areas where the applicant was below the benchmark (this process was managed by a consultant who had done similar work for Elections British Columbia).
- From January until April, the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer and Assistant Director of Human Resources for the Legislative Assembly interviewed the applicants in Regina, Moose Jaw or Saskatoon.
- The age demographic for returning officers has decreased dramatically as a result of merit-based appointment of returning officers by the Chief Electoral Officer.

NEW RETURNING OFFICER'S MANUAL

- The Returning Officer's Manual was re-written in simpler language, in roughly chronological order and with page numbers, with the assistance of three returning officers. This re-write was completed in early April just in time to unveil at the returning officer/election clerk training. It was well received by previous and new ROs and ECs.

REVISED TRAINING FOR RETURNING OFFICERS/ELECTION CLERKS

- The all-party committee (which included representation from the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer) met in 2004 to discuss possible changes to The Election Act, 1996. When it was recommended that returning officers be appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer it was also recognized that "Elections Saskatchewan be encouraged to provide more and ongoing training to returning officers, including training about information technology".

- It was decided that the duration and format of training needed to change dramatically with the realization that approximately 50 per cent of the returning officers and 60 per cent of the election clerks had not acted in that position previously and due to many changes in the legislation, policy and forms since the last election.
- The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer designed the training program with the assistance of Field Liaison Officers. The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer performed the role of trainer for the five training sessions (two in Saskatoon/three in Regina) with assistance from Field Liaison Officers and the Manager of Elections Finances. A longer three-day training period, smaller class size, group problem solving, role playing and some Power Point presentations by our software developer (ESPREE) and a Canada Post representative added to the variety. Feedback from ROs/ECs was very positive.

PRE-WRIT ASSIGNMENTS

- After successful pilot projects for the two previous by-elections, returning officers had a formal list of pre-writ activities to complete in order to prepare themselves for the general election: Included in the pre-writ activities are a series of action plans and checklists itemized possible office space, possible office staff, tentative list of enumerators, tentative polling place and advance poll locations, etc.

11. DEVELOP A POLICY FRAMEWORK

Objectives:

A new policy framework should be developed that outlines standards, processes and formats for the preparation of policies, guidelines and procedures. The existing policies, procedures and guidelines should be reviewed to ensure conformity with the new framework. A plan should be prepared for the development of new policies where required and the review and modification of existing policies. As strategic initiatives are undertaken, the policy issues should be considered and planned for.

Accomplishments:

- A TEMPLATE FOR A NEW POLICY FRAMEWORK WAS DEVELOPED. THE NEW POLICY TEMPLATE HAS BEEN USED TO DEVELOP FIVE NEW POLICIES (SEE ITEM #8 - CONDUCT A REVIEW OF CURRENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR DETAILS).

Update: See Short-Term Objective #8 for new policies developed in 2006-2007.

B. MEDIUM-TERM (BY APRIL 1, 2007) [WITH UPDATES]

1. IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

Objectives:

This activity must be completed early in the 2006-2007 fiscal year in order to be election ready (organizationally). This may require additional staffing and training and will have an impact on the Election Readiness Plan.

Accomplishments:

AS NOTED IN SHORT-TERM INITIATIVE NUMBER 7, IT WAS DECIDED THAT NOW WAS NOT THE TIME TO MAKE ANY MAJOR CHANGES TO THE CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION (ANTICIPATED IN 2007).

No update required.

2. CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Objectives:

The implementation of the Change Management Strategy should continue through this medium-term period. Some of the activities may not be concluded as planned due to other critical initiatives, i.e. election readiness activities. It is important to maintain the momentum established in the short-term towards being an organization that embraces change in a proactive manner.

Accomplishments:

THE ORGANIZATION HAS EMBRACED CHANGE AS EVIDENCED IN:

- THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BY-ELECTION IN WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY;
- THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BY-ELECTION IN MARTENSVILLE;
- PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION; AND
- OVERALL ATTITUDE OF LOOKING FOR POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO ALL ASPECTS OF THE ORGANIZATION WHILE BEING CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE CHANGES JUST FOR CHANGE SAKE IF THE PROCESS IS WORKING WELL AS IT IS.

Update: The Organization continues to embrace change with changes such as the new returning officer's manual, new manual for deputy returning officers and poll clerks, new training for returning officers and election clerks and pre-writ action plans and other preparations for the next general election.

3. DEVELOP AN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan's headquarters technology requirements are likely to be impacted by the studies conducted in the short-term in regards to implementing a permanent electronic voter's list, implementing a contact centre, implementing an election finance reporting system and potentially by some of the outreach strategies selected. It is important to consider the development of an Information Technology Strategy once these other studies are completed.

Accomplishments:

THIS STUDY WOULD RESULT IN A BLUEPRINT FOR:

- THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPUTERIZED BUSINESS SOLUTIONS (THE APPLICATIONS ARCHITECTURE);
- THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOFTWARE STANDARDS (THE SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE);
- THE INSTALLATION OF A STANDARDIZED COMPUTER HARDWARE INFRASTRUCTURE;
- THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK (VOICE AND DATA); AND
- USING THE INTERNET (ENABLING TECHNOLOGY, NOT CONTENT).

Update: In the Spring of 2006 the Office engaged the services of a systems consulting firm to make the necessary adjustments to Election Alberta's web-based AROES software to make it the Saskatchewan specific ESPREE software. The firm that the Office has engaged is the original firm that developed AROES and has customized the software for Elections NWT and Elections Nunavut. The software changes related to the List of Electors were operative by December 2006 (Phase I – Release 1). After the Martensville by-election some tweaking was done to take into account suggestions from the automation coordinator and data entry operators and to expand its use to a general election. (Phase I – Release 2 is now almost complete). At the time of writing the developers, have begun work on Phase II - Elections Module (polls, polling places, candidates and ballots) and Phase III – Election Results (unofficial and official results). These modules are to be tested and in place by the end of August.

4. IMPLEMENT THE ELECTIONS FINANCE REPORTING SYSTEM

Objectives:

The system developed should be introduced to the stakeholders involved in some form of a focus group to get feedback and reactions to the new application, (i.e. consultation, before a formal roll-out and training exercise is scheduled). This will be critical to the successful implementation of this system.

A comprehensive familiarization and training plan should be established as a part of the roll-out strategy for this critically important system.

If a by-election occurs, it would be a valuable learning experience prior to using this system for the first time in a general election. Since these are beyond the purview of Elections Saskatchewan, it may be worth considering a by-election simulation activity, if no other opportunities arise.

Accomplishments:

DUE TO BUDGET REDUCTIONS THIS PROJECT WAS SHELVED FOR THE 2006-2007 FISCAL YEAR. DUE TO OTHER MORE PRESSING PRIORITIES THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN DELAYED PERHAPS UNTIL THE END OF THE 2007-2008 FISCAL YEAR.

5. IMPLEMENT THE CONTACT CENTRE STRATEGY

Objectives:

This will be a key element in communicating with stakeholders and issues identification and management in the next general election. The recommendations from the strategic study should be implemented as soon as possible and included in the Elections Readiness Plan.

There is a direct linkage between the Contact Centre operation and the outreach/advertising campaigns. The integration of these plans is critical to the actual success of the Contact Centre in regards to the preparation of frequently asked questions/answers and the development of staffing and training plans.

Accomplishments:

A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL WAS POSTED FOR TENDER EARLIER THIS YEAR. THE SUCCESSFUL BIDDER WAS IDENTIFIED AND A ONE DAY SCOPING SESSION WAS HELD IN EARLY JUNE. AT THE TIME OF WRITING FURTHER DETAILS AND TRAINING ARE BEING FINALIZED.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Objectives:

This activity is a follow-up to the Outreach Strategies Strategic Initiative conducted in the short-term. It will include the development of an action plan to implement the recommendations from the previous study. This plan will include activities to be conducted in the period leading up to the next anticipated provincial general election in 2007, as well as activities to be conducted during the election period.

Accomplishments:

ADVERTISING

- *IN PAST ELECTIONS THE OFFICE HAD A SERIES OF FIVE NEWSPAPER ADS WHICH WERE VERY LEGALISTIC AND OVERLY WORDY. IN DISCUSSION WITH OUR ADVERTISING AGENCY WE HAVE REDUCED THE SERIES TO FOUR NEWSPAPER ADS, SIMPLIFIED THE TEXT, MADE THE DESIGN MORE VISUALLY APPEALING, EXPANDED TO YOUTH ORIENTED/ENTERTAINMENT/ALTERNATIVE*

NEWSPAPERS IN REGINA AND SASKATOON, AND ADDED RADIO ADVERTISING. WE ARE EXPLORING THE USE OF A VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE TO BE PLACED AS AN INSERT IN THE ABOVE YOUTH ORIENTED /ENTERTAINMENT/ALTERNATIVE NEWSPAPERS.

ABORIGINAL PERSONS

- ADVERTISING ON NORTHERN RADIO STATIONS AND IN ABORIGINAL AND YOUTH ORIENTED/ ENTERTAINMENT/ALTERNATIVE NEWSPAPERS ARE BEING CONSIDERED AS A WAY TO BETTER REACH THE ABORIGINAL DEMOGRAPHIC.
- OUR ADVERTISING AGENCY WAS CONTRACTED IN JANUARY TO DEVELOP A PROPOSAL TO INCREASE FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS PARTICIPATION IN THE NEXT PROVINCIAL ELECTION. THE OFFICE IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING THE RECOMMENDATIONS.
- A COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT HAS BEEN HIRED FOR THE SUMMER TO DO RESEARCH REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING TWO ABORIGINAL LIAISON POSITIONS FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION AND CREATE A BROCHURE DIRECTED AT ABORIGINAL VOTERS.

YOUTH

- ADVERTISING ON RADIO STATIONS ACROSS THE PROVINCE AND IN YOUTH ORIENTED/ ENTERTAINMENT/ALTERNATIVE NEWSPAPERS ARE BEING CONSIDERED AS A WAY TO BETTER REACH THE YOUTH DEMOGRAPHIC.
- A COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT HAS BEEN HIRED FOR THE SUMMER TO:
 - RESEARCH THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING TWO YOUTH LIAISON POSITIONS FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION;
 - UPDATE THE WORK DONE BY CANADA WORLD YOUTH STUDENTS TO CREATE A "YOUTH WEB SITE";
 - ENHANCE THE STUDENT BROCHURE; AND
 - PROVIDE GENERAL ASSISTANCE REGARDING REVISIONS TO WEB SITE CONTENT.

BROCHURES

- A SERIES OF ABSENTEE VOTING BROCHURES ARE NOW BEING FINALIZED FOR TRAVELLERS, MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES AND INMATES OF CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS.
- THE STUDENT VOTING BROCHURE IS BEING REVISED AND A BROCHURE DIRECTED AT ABORIGINAL VOTERS IS BEING DEVELOPED.

VOTER INFORMATION CARDS

- VOTER INFORMATION CARDS (VICs) WERE PILOTED DURING THE PAST TWO BY-ELECTIONS. AS A RESULT OF OUR PILOTS AND THE RESULTING RELATIONSHIP WITH CANADA POST IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO EXPAND THIS COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLE TO THE GENERAL ELECTION. THE VICs WILL BE DELIVERED ONE WEEK PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY AND BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF ADVANCE POLLS.

WEB SITE

- AT THE TIME OF WRITING THE OFFICE HAS BEGUN WORKING WITH THE WEB SITE /CONTRACTOR TO MAKE THE CURRENT ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE MORE "USER-FRIENDLY" AND CREATE AN "ELECTION WEB SITE IN WAITING". THE OFFICE HAS A SUMMER STUDENT BUILDING ON THE WORK OF THE TWO CANADA WORLD YOUTH PROGRAM INTERNS FROM 2005 IN ORDER TO ADD A YOUTH SECTION TO THE ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN WEB SITE.

FIELD LIAISON OFFICERS

- IT WAS DECIDED TO CREATE THE POSITION OF FIELD LIAISON OFFICER (FLO) IN ORDER TO PROVIDE MORE SERVICE TO ASSIST RETURNING OFFICERS. MATERIALS FROM ELECTIONS CANADA, ELECTIONS ONTARIO AND ELECTION MANITOBA SERVED AS A GUIDE TO CREATE THE FLO STATEMENT OF WORK, MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (CONTRACT), ETC. THE SIX FLOs AND ONE PART-TIME SPARE FLO ARE ALL FORMER RETURNING OFFICERS FROM ACROSS THE PROVINCE. THE FLOs WILL OPERATE FROM THEIR HOME AND ASSIST ROs. DAILY CONFERENCE CALLS DURING THE ELECTION WILL BE HELD WITH FLOs AND ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN HEADQUARTERS.

7. IMPLEMENT THE AUTOMATION OF ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY PRODUCT STRATEGIES

Objectives:

The activity is dependent on the study being conducted in the short-term. The implementation plan will be based on the recommendations from the earlier strategic initiative and must be completed and in place prior to the next anticipated general election. The electoral map products required are critical to the conduct of an election for Elections Saskatchewan elections workers, the political parties and candidates for campaign purposes and for the general public to know the electoral boundaries and what constituency they are eligible to vote in.

Accomplishments:

- FOR STAFFING AND FINANCIAL REASONS IT WAS DECIDED NOT TO DO A COMPLETE REMAPPING OF ALL 58 CONSTITUENCIES. REVISED MAPS WERE PRODUCED FOR THOSE CONSTITUENCIES WHERE THE MOST RESIDENTIAL GROWTH HAS OCCURRED SINCE THE LAST ELECTION. AT THE TIME OF WRITING FIVE CONSTITUENCIES HAVE BEEN REMAPPED (REGINA NORTHEAST, REGINA QU'APPELLE VALLEY, REGINA WASCANA PLAINS, SASKATOON SILVER SPRINGS AND SASKATOON SOUTHEAST). AT THE TIME OF WRITING TWO MORE CONSTITUENCIES (MARTENSVILLE AND REGINA DEWDNEY) ARE NEARING COMPLETION IN THE PROCESS OF RE-MAPPING.

8. IMPLEMENT CHANGES FROM BILL 119

Objectives:

This initiative is dependent on the recommendations and plans developed as part of the Strategic Impacts Analysis conducted in the short-term. This is a critical initiative that must be completed prior to the next election.

Accomplishments:

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGES FROM BILL 119 IS ALMOST COMPLETE PENDING AN EVALUATION OF THE WEYBURN-BIG MUDDY BY-ELECTION.

Update: After the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election several initiatives were tweaked slightly and the recruitment of returning officers by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer was implemented as below.

- *One of the major recent amendments to The Elections Act, 1996, was the change from returning officers being identified and appointed by Executive Council to being recruited and appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer, based on merit. Policies, procedures and forms were developed using background materials and examples from Elections Manitoba, Elections British Columbia and Elections Quebec.*
- *After completing an application form, short-listed applicants were directed to take a "Prevue test". This test, taken on a home computer, identified possible areas where the skills of the applicant were above or below the benchmark set by Elections Saskatchewan for the position. An individualized print-out was produced for each short-listed applicant identifying possible questions with respect to areas where the applicant was below the benchmark (this process was managed by a consultant who had done similar work for Elections BC).*
- *From January until April, the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer and Assistant Director of Human Resources for the Legislative Assembly interviewed the applicants in Regina, Moose Jaw or Saskatoon.*
- *The age demographic for returning officers has decreased dramatically as a result of merit-based appointment of returning officers by the Chief Electoral Officer.*

9. PREPARE A PLAN TO IMPLEMENT A PERMANENT ELECTRONIC VOTER'S LIST

Objectives:

This initiative is dependent on the results of the impact analysis study and regulations that will be developed after Bill 119 is enacted.

The focus of this initiative will be on ensuring that the Chief Electoral Officer is positioned to meet the objectives outlined when Bill 119 was introduced. At the second reading of Bill 119 there was an announcement that "One of the most significant recommendations of the committee was the development of a permanent electronic voter's list. Under the Bill, regulations will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a process to ensure that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voter's list."

Without pre-supposing the content of the set of regulations developed or the results of the impact analysis and recommendations, this initiative will be a major undertaking for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Currently there are no processes, procedures, guidelines or technological tools in place to meet this requirement.

In addition, this initiative is directly linked to the automation of electoral geography products initiative. The key to a successful electronic register of voters is knowing where the eligible electors live (i.e. a physical address), so that they can be directed to vote in the proper constituency and the correct polling division within that constituency. Since people move and addresses don't it is critical to have an automated geography system with all addresses pinpointed within the electoral boundaries. This becomes more complex in rural settings where physical addresses are more difficult to determine and automate.

Another critical success or risk factor that must be considered is timing. With less than two years to the next anticipated provincial general election, it may be prudent to focus on implementing a phased approach to developing a permanent electronic voter's list for Saskatchewan.

Other Canadian electoral jurisdictions have followed an approach of developing the tools, processes and procedures to collect the voter information from a final enumeration (either prior to or during an electoral event) as a basis for the implementation of a permanent register of voters. In these situations the development of complex technology tools (integrated with electoral geography computer systems) and the implementation of reliable data sources to maintain the registers were conducted outside the pressures of getting ready for and conducting an electoral event.

All of the above must be seriously considered by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in the conduct of this important initiative.

Accomplishments:

THERE HAS BEEN SOME PROGRESS WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ESPREE (SEE MEDIUM-TERM INITIATIVE #3 EARLIER IN THIS DOCUMENT).

THERE HAVE BEEN NO REGULATIONS FORWARDED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF BILL 119. AS A RESULT CERTAIN ASPECTS OF A MOVE TOWARDS A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS ARE AT A STANDSTILL AND WILL HAVE TO BE CARRIED OUT AT SOME FUTURE DATE. AN ELECTRONIC LIST OF ELECTORS IS NOW POSSIBLE WITH THE ADVENT OF ESPREE. IT WILL NOT HOWEVER BE A PERMANENT LIST OF ELECTORS BECAUSE THERE ARE NO REGULATIONS TO SET DOWN HOW THE PROCESS OF UPDATING THE LIST OF ELECTORS FROM VARIOUS DATA-SOURCES WILL BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN THE ENUMERATION WHICH MUST TAKE PLACE AT THE CALL OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ELECTION AND THE CALL OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ELECTION.

10. DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO MEASURE STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

Objectives:

Strategies should be developed to measure stakeholder satisfaction before, during and after the next election. These strategies will be related to a large degree by the outreach campaigns conducted by Elections Saskatchewan. All stakeholders should be consulted in some meaningful manner. This will provide measurements and benchmarks to assess the results of the new strategies and activities implemented that can be used to make corrections to current practices, introduce new practices and continue the change management culture of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Accomplishments:

A BUDGET ITEM OF \$33,000 FOR STRATEGIES TO MEASURE STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION DID NOT RECEIVE APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY FROM THE OFFICE'S 2007-2008 BUDGET. THIS INCLUDED THE COST OF A PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY AND LIAISON WITH THE RETURNING OFFICERS ADVISORY GROUP. AS A RESULT THE OBJECTIVES FOR THIS INITIATIVE WILL BE DEFERRED INTO THE LONG-TERM INITIATIVES.

VI. ANNUAL ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN ACTIVITIES

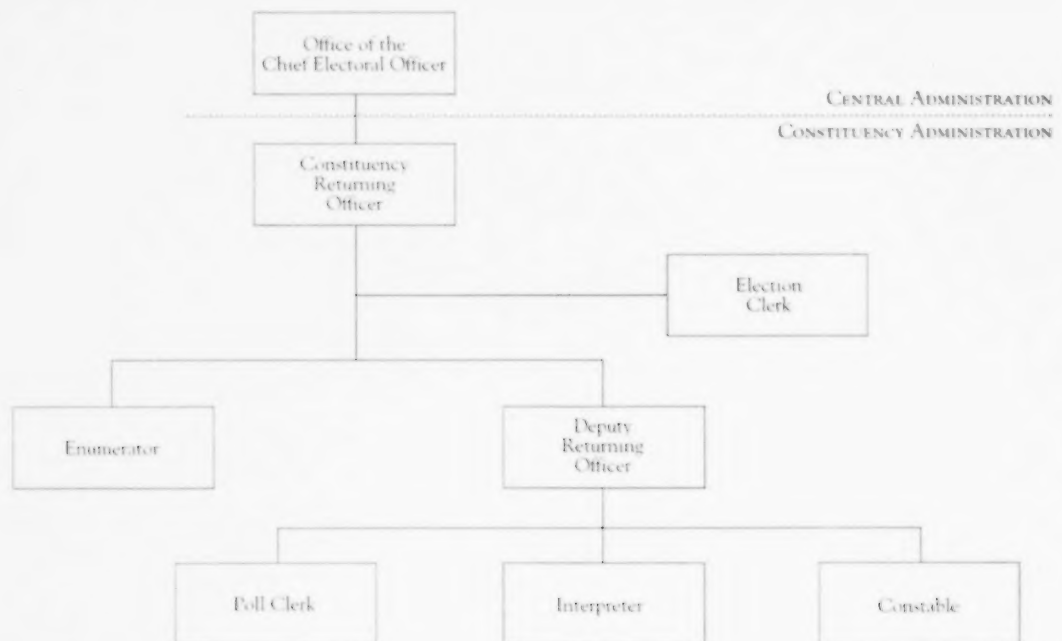
The mandate of the Office is defined by the unique and complex character of Saskatchewan's polity, including the inherent uncertainty of the provincial electoral cycle, the decentralized nature of electoral administration, and the multi-layered interaction among registered political parties, candidates and the electorate.

This section outlines specific Office activities undertaken to maintain a state of provincial election readiness.

A. CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICERS

Central electoral administration is the responsibility of the Office, with regional operational conduct of electoral events being the responsibility of constituency returning officers. As representatives of the Office, constituency returning officers are entrusted with advancing the neutrality of the province's decentralized electoral process by administering and reporting on electoral proceedings (general or by-elections, referenda and plebiscites). The decentralized nature of Elections Saskatchewan's electoral administration is depicted in the schematic below.

DECENTRALIZED ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION - ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN



An important part of maintaining election readiness is having constituency returning officer appointments for the Province's 58 constituencies. All constituency returning officer appointments/cancellations from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007, as promulgated in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*, are set out in the following table.

**CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICERS
(AS OF MARCH 31, 2007)**

ORDER IN COUNCIL DATE/NUMBER	DATE GAZETTED VOLUME/NUMBER	APPOINTMENTS/CANCELLATIONS
February 12, 2003 (O.C. 56/2003)	February 2, 2007 (Vol. 103 No. 5)	<i>Cancellations:</i> Cypress Hills - Hazel Benison and Regina Dewdney - Lynn Scott. <i>Appointments:</i> Cypress Hills - David Hooper and Regina Dewdney - Ruth Taylor.
N/A	May 5, 2006 Vol. 102 No. 18	<i>Cancellation:</i> Weyburn-Big Muddy - Bryan Lester Wilson <i>Appointment:</i> Weyburn-Big Muddy - Dave Unraw

With the proclamation of amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, proclaimed on March 22, 2006 any vacancies for returning officers that occurred after March 22, 2006 are now appointments by the Chief Electoral Officer through an open competitive process.

At the time of writing, 16 new returning officers have been appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer through a competitive interview process. Their appointments were gazetted on June 1, 2007. In addition, five new returning officers have been appointed via direct appointment by the Chief Electoral Officer for reasons of difficulty recruiting because of location or vacancy during a critical period. Five of the six were also gazetted on June 1, 2007. At the time of writing the gazettement of one appointment is pending.

B. REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

1. REGISTRATION

Under section 224 of *The Election Act, 1996*, a political party may apply for registration any time between the days fixed for the return to a writ of general election and the fifth day after the issuance of the writ commencing the next general election. A registration application must be in prescribed form and be accompanied by a complete and accurate petition for registration. Each petition must be executed by no fewer than 2,500 eligible provincial voters, 1,000 of whom must reside in at least ten provincial constituencies, with a minimum of 100 voters in each of those respective constituencies. Concurrent with its application and petition, a political party must file a written statement declaring that its primary purpose is to field candidates for election as Members of the Legislative Assembly. An audited financial statement must also be filed along with prescribed information in respect of the party's leader, senior officers, chief official agent and auditor.

Once the Office has reviewed all requisite registration documentation and vetted the application, the Chief Electoral Officer will register the political party and, in accordance with section 233 of *The Election Act, 1996*,

publish its name in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*. A political party, once registered, is entitled to incur expenses, solicit and receive contributions, participate in the Province's political contributions tax credit system, and field candidates for election to the Legislative Assembly. Registered political parties in an election/by-election year are also entitled, where eligible, to reimbursement of a portion of lawfully incurred election expenses.

On June 5, 2006, The Chief Electoral Officer registered the Saskatchewan Marijuana Party as a registered political party in Saskatchewan. On July 18, 2006, the Chief Electoral Officer registered the Saskatchewan Heritage Party as a registered political party in Saskatchewan.

On March 31, 2007, eight political parties were registered in the province. Their names, abbreviations, leaders and chief official agents, as recorded on the Register of Political Parties, are set out in the following table.

REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES
(AS AT MARCH 31, 2007)

POLITICAL PARTY NAME	PARTY ABBREVIATION	PARTY LEADER	CHIEF OFFICIAL AGENT
Green Party of Saskatchewan	Green Party	Sandra Finley	John Warnock
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	New Democratic Party (N.D.P.)	Lorne Calvert	Douglas Styll
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	P.C. Party of Sask.	Rick Swenson	Luke Jacob Schmidt
Saskatchewan Heritage Party	Saskatchewan Heritage Party	Kurtis Devon Hein	Ross Staruiala
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	Saskatchewan Liberal Party	David Karwacki	Alan McIntyre
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	SKMP	Nathan Holowaty	Tanya Derbowka
Saskatchewan Party	Saskatchewan Party	Brad Wall	Wes Becker
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	Western Independence Party (W.I.P.)	Gordon Elias	Shelia Houser

In accordance with section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the *Register of Political Parties* is available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

2. POTENTIAL CANDIDATES

In accordance with section 230 of *The Election Act, 1996*, any individual selected to be a candidate by a registered political party's constituency association, or being a person a party intends to endorse, must give written notice to that effect to the Office. Such notification must be filed in conjunction with the candidate's written appointment and consent of a business manager in accordance with section 236, and written appointment and consent of an auditor in accordance with section 238 of *The Election Act, 1996*. The Chief Electoral Office maintains a Register of Potential Candidates and information filed under section 236 and 238 of *The Election Act, 1996* for public review.

As at March 31, 2007, 63 individuals were registered on the *Register of Potential Candidates*.

3. ANNUAL FINANCING REPORTING

In accordance with section 250 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the chief official agent of a registered political party shall annually file, prior to May 1st, an audited fiscal period return in prescribed form detailing that party's financial activities. This annual financial reporting is undertaken on a *Registered Political Party's Fiscal Period Return* (Form E-521). Form E-521 reporting excludes expenses incurred during an election campaign period - such expenses are reported pursuant to section 251 of *The Election Act, 1996*.

Form E-521 requires that individual donations of money and commercial value exceeding \$250 received in a year from an individual, corporation, trade union, unincorporated organization or association or any other person or group of persons be reported. To deter contributions from third party agents, registered political parties must enclose with their Form E-521, copies, certified by the party's chief official agent, of every statement or document a party received pursuant to subsections 240(6) and (7) of *The Election Act, 1996*. An auditor's report filed in accordance with 237 of *The Election Act, 1996*, must also accompany a registered political party's Form E-521.

As represented in their respective annual fiscal period returns filed on Form E-521, depicted in the following tables is a summary of registered political party contributions received, and expenses incurred, for the fiscal year 2006.

FISCAL YEAR 2006

REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY	CONTRIBUTIONS		OPERATING EXPENSES	EXPENSES		TOTAL
	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	CASH ON HAND		ADVERTISING	OTHER	
Green Party of Saskatchewan	\$5,981.00	\$2,139.04	\$2,242.00	-	\$5,050.00	\$7,292.00
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	1,715,235.00	1,142,026.00	1,644,892.00	-	220,447.00	1,865,339.00
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	8,473.00	8,637.00	12,408.00	343.00	978.00	13,729.00
Saskatchewan Heritage Party	765.00	207.00	537.00	-	21.00	558.00
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	327,452.00	43,465.00	181,161.00	879.00	49,457.00	231,497.00
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	4,250.00	1,085.00	2,965.00	-	200.00	3,165.00
Saskatchewan Party	1,406,375.00	177,454.00	982,445.00	76,271.00	339,436.00	1,398,152.00
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	7,673.00	6,417.00	3,093.00	-	-	3,093.00

FISCAL YEAR 2005
(AS ADJUSTED)

REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY	CONTRIBUTIONS		OPERATING EXPENSES	EXPENSES		TOTAL
	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	CASH ON HAND		ADVERTISING	OTHER	
Green Party of Saskatchewan	\$8,386.61	\$3,450.77	\$1,790.01	-	\$7,668.86	\$9,458.87
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	1,802,146.27	924,019.35	1,529,036.80	-	213,364.76	1,742,401.56
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	43,187.00	(2,458.00)	51,507.00	-	-	51,507.00
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	295,646.00	36,824.00	140,640.00	3,908.00	4,160.00	148,708.00
Saskatchewan Party	983,846.00	227,636.00	587,713.00	466.00	216,034.00	804,213.00
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	2,225.00	1,834.34	1,540.25	114.00	-	1,654.25

Note: The information provided for 2006 is from fiscal returns as filed. Office review is ongoing and any required changes will be reported in the subsequent Annual Report.

Pursuant to section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, registered political party Form E-521 returns are available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan. 2006 returns may be viewed on the Elections Saskatchewan Web site.

C. SASKATCHEWAN POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TAX CREDIT SYSTEM

1. INTRODUCTION

The political contributions tax credit system provides provincial resident taxpayers, inclusive of individuals and corporations, the opportunity to claim tax credits based on eligible contributions made to a registered political party or independent candidate for which a valid tax receipt is obtained. *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* governs the Province's political contributions tax credit system and provides the basis for calculating political contribution tax credits for use by provincial resident taxpayers under *The Income Tax Act, 2000* (Saskatchewan) (the "Provincial Tax Act").

Tax receipts issued by registered political parties or independent candidates must conform to policies underlying the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* to qualify under the *Provincial Tax Act*. The Chief Electoral Officer has interpreted these policies to include the election of Members to the Legislative Assembly and necessarily related activities. Specifically, registered political parties and independent candidates may receipt contributions from provincial resident taxpayers, in accordance with the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, when those contributions are used to advance the democratic process in Saskatchewan.

2. TAX RECEIPTS

Official income tax receipts are issued under section 8 of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* by a chief official agent on behalf of a registered political party or by a business manager in the case of an independent candidate. Only chief official agents whose names are recorded in the *Register of Political Parties* maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer can issue tax receipts. The business manager of an independent candidate is eligible to issue tax receipts if the constituency returning officer in accordance with subsection 48(2) of *The Election Act, 1996* certifies the candidate's nomination.

- Tax receipts may be issued for eligible contributions of \$25.00 or more received by a registered political party or independent candidate.

Effective with the 2004 taxation year, the tax credit available to provincial resident taxpayers is calculated in accordance with the following formula:

- Where the total eligible contribution is \$400 or less, the amount of the tax credit that a taxpayer is entitled to claim for a taxation year is 75 percent of the total contribution; or
- Where the total eligible contribution is greater than \$400 but not greater than \$750, the tax credit is \$300 plus 50 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds \$400; and
- Where the total eligible contribution is greater than \$750, the tax credit a taxpayer is entitled to claim is lesser of:
 - \$475 plus 33 1/3 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds \$750; or
 - \$650.

3. ANNUAL / CAMPAIGN PERIOD REPORTING

In accordance with section 13 of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, a chief official agent of a participating registered political party must file a reconciliation of tax receipts used for the preceding calendar year. This reconciliation is filed with the Chief Electoral Officer in prescribed form on or by the last day of April. This annual reporting is undertaken on an *Annual Report of Contributions (Registered Political Party)* (Form P-602) and details the aggregate amount of contributions received, the number of tax receipts issued, spoiled or duplicated, and the number of tax receipts retained (i.e., unused).

Where an independent candidate participates in the Province's political contributions tax credit system, that candidate's business manager must file, in prescribed form, a reconciliation of tax receipts provided for use during the campaign period, together with the aggregate amount of contributions received, in accordance with section 12 of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. Independent candidates campaign period reporting is submitted on a *Campaign Period Report of Contributions (Independent Candidate)* (Form P-606).

The aggregate value of political contribution tax credit receipts for 2002 was \$2,010,183.89, for 2003 was \$4,253,132.34, for 2004 was \$1,811,834.88, for 2005 was \$2,068,865.10 and for 2006 was \$2,384,553.43. \$11,110 was receipted and reported for independent candidates for 2003. Registered political parties, which issued tax receipts, and the aggregate value of those receipts for 2001-2006, are set out in the following tables.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIPTED
(CALENDAR YEAR 2001-2006)

REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY	AGGREGATE RECEIPTED CONTRIBUTIONS					
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006*
Green Party of Saskatchewan	-	-	-	-	\$7,231.61	\$6,206.00
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	\$876,999.52	\$1,003,187.32	1,239,870.72	\$855,799.18	1,016,222.71	1,014,666.63
New Green Alliance	8,500.00	8,883.16	17,081.30	13,373.00	-	-
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	-	-	-	-	-	4,540.00
Saskatchewan Heritage Party	-	-	-	-	-	400.00
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	54,171.80	65,132.00	261,013.39	122,556.38	166,084.88	242,512.71
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party	-	-	-	-	-	1,876.21
Saskatchewan Party	723,452.00	932,981.41	2,705,533.69	816,063.40	877,475.90	1,106,768.88
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	-	-	18,523.24	4,042.92	1,850.00	7,583.00
Independent	-	-	11,110.00	-	-	-
Total	\$1,663,123.32	\$2,010,183.89	\$4,253,132.34	\$1,811,834.88	\$2,068,865.10	\$2,384,553.43

SASKATCHEWAN TAX CREDITS CLAIMED
FOR POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS (2001-2006)

Tax Year	Total
2001	\$1,633,123.32
2002	2,010,183.89
2003	4,253,132.34
2004	1,811,834.88
2005	2,068,865.10
2006*	2,384,553.43
Total Tax Credits claimed	\$14,161,692.96

* Note: The information provided for 2006 is from fiscal returns as filed. Office review is ongoing and any required change will be reported in the subsequent Annual Report.

Pursuant to subsection 16(2) of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* and section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, annual registered political party and independent candidate campaign filings, on Form P-602 and P-606, respectively, are available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

D. ANNUAL REPORTING, STATUTORY COMPLIANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

1. ANNUAL REPORTING

On April 1, 1949, the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing (the "Select Standing Committee") reported to the Legislative Assembly that they unanimously agreed:

... election expenses be shown (in Public Accounts) not only in total for each electoral division but that there be made available to each Member a detailed listing of the expenditures for his particular electoral division; these listings to be ... available to opposition and government alike.

In accordance with the Select Standing Committee's recommendation, the office prepares and distributes the *Detail of Expenditures* (referring to non-election, election and by-election expenditures, for fiscal years 2006-2007) to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, the Clerk of the Executive Council, and Members of the Legislative Assembly. Because of the timing of the Martensville by-election, constituency expenditures cannot be finalized until September 2007. The report should be tabled shortly thereafter.

In addition to the recommendation of the Select Standing Committee, statutory reporting is the means by which the Legislative Assembly has directed the Office to report on activities managed by the Chief Electoral Officer. Such reporting, in addition to outlining the conduct of each electoral event and financial practices related therefore to, provides an annual update of Office activities for consideration by the Legislative Assembly and members of the public. The Office, pursuant to sections 7 and 286 of *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Tabling of Documents Act, 1991*, prepared and tabled the following reports in the Legislative Assembly from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007.

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN - TABLED REPORTS (APRIL 1, 2006 - MARCH 31, 2007)

DOCUMENTS TABLED	DATE TABLED
<i>Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan (2005-2006)</i>	July 26, 2006

To comply with sections 174, 221, 233 and 262 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the Office also published the following notices in *The Saskatchewan Gazette* from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007, as set out in the following table.

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PUBLISHED NOTICES - THE SASKATCHEWAN GAZETTE
(APRIL 1, 2006 - MARCH 31, 2007)

DATE GAZETTED	VOLUME/NUMBER	GAZETTED ITEM
July 21, 2006	Vol. 102 No. 29	Notice given of Dustin Duncan's election as the member of the Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy.
December 29, 2006	Vol. 102 No. 52	Summary of financial contributions received and expenses incurred by candidates for the June 19, 2006 by-election in the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy.
February 2, 2007	Vol. 103 No. 5	Province of Saskatchewan Expense Limits for the twelve-month period ended December 31, 2007.
February 16, 2007	Vol. 103 No. 7	Amendment of the abbreviation of the Saskatchewan Liberal Association from Liberal to Saskatchewan Liberal Party

In support of the heightened transparency objective of *The Election Act, 1996*, the foregoing reports, documents and notices are available for public review at Elections Saskatchewan.

2. STATUTORY COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE

The Election Act, 1996 places a duty on the Office to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents and business managers to discharge administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, to compile requisite support documentation, and to disclose annual and electoral financial details in accordance with *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. To this end, the Office previously published the following guidance documentation, pursuant to section 5 and Part VII (Registration and Election Financing) of *The Election Act, 1996*: i) *Registered Political Party's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-508); ii) *Chief Official Agent's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-520); iii) *Auditor's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-528); iv) *Candidate's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-400); v) *Business Manager's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-402); and vi) *Auditor's Guide to Provisions of The Election Act, 1996* (Form E-404).

Forms E-400, E-402 and E-404 were updated in the 2005-2006 fiscal year with section references and revised to take into account the amendments proclaimed March 22, 2006. In the Fall of 2006, Forms E-508, E-520 and E-528 were updated with section references and revised to take into account the amendments proclaimed March 22, 2006. The above guides as well as the E-412 Candidate Returns and the E-Registered Political Party Return and all the associated attachments are now available on CD.

Further, to outline the statutory obligations under the system governing registered political parties' and independent candidates' acceptance of eligible contributions and the issuance of official tax receipts, the Office also previously prepared and disseminated the *Guide to Provisions of The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Registered Political Party)* (Form E-600) and the *Guide to Provisions of the Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Independent Candidate)* (Form E-604).

3. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE / RELATIONS

In accordance with section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the Chief Electoral Officer will supply any person who so requests copies of, or extracts from, registers or any report, return or document pertaining to a registered political party or candidate, which are statutorily filed with the Office. It should be noted that such reports, returns and documents may not be complete or may contain errors/omissions, as the Office's review and verification of such documentation may not have been completed at time of initial public inspection. Following Office review and verification, all finalized reports, returns and documents remain available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

The Office also maintains a public relations program to raise political stakeholder and public awareness of important aspects of the Office's mandate, to respond to public enquires, and to liaise with registered political parties, candidates and their chief official agents and business managers.

E. OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES - ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN

The Office annually presents budgetary expenditure estimates by function - administration, constituency returning office maintenance and annual electoral related activities - to the Board of Internal Economy. Actual annual administration and constituency level financial results for fiscal year 2006-2007 are set out in summary form in the following table.

OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES - ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN
FISCAL YEAR 2006 - 2007

EXPENDITURE CODE	ADMINISTRATION	CONSTITUENCIES (58)
Operational		
Personal Services	\$441,031.19	\$42,161.00
Contractual Services	238,806.10	48.93
Advertising	10,418.89	-
Travel and Business	15,299.03	2,212.05
Supplies and Services	4,060.66	46.65
Assets Expensed	19,209.66	-
Total	\$728,825.53	\$44,468.63

Note: Refer to the Appendix for current year financial statements and notes.

VII. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTIONS

The Chief Electoral Officer is charged with administering the Province's electoral statute, and with assessing and, where applicable, reimbursing eligible election expenses paid from the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Office has established a system of financial review and audit to certify public reimbursement of election expenses by reviewing financial practices, documents and disclosure of registered political parties and candidates. The expenses and income of registered political parties, candidates are reported, the returns are audited and Elections Saskatchewan Expenses are noted. There were no provincial general elections to report on in this fiscal year.

The Office administered two provincial by-elections each of which will be the subject of a distinct report to be tabled in the Legislature later this year.

VIII. LIAISON

To improve the electoral process in Saskatchewan, the Office reviews and assesses new electoral administrative initiatives on an on-going basis. In order to be kept up to date on innovations in other jurisdictions and in order to gauge public expectations liaison with others is desirable.

In 2006/2007 fiscal year, Office representatives participated in federal, provincial and territorial electoral meetings, and conferences as summarized below:

A. COUNCIL ON GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS LAWS (COGEL)

The Chief Electoral Officer attended the December 2006 COGEL Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA and is currently serving on the Awards Committee.

B. CONFERENCE OF CANADIAN ELECTION OFFICIALS - 2006

Federal, provincial and territorial Chief Electoral Officers and senior staff have met annually since 1975 at the *Conference of Canadian Election Officials* to discuss all facets of electoral administration. From, July 18-21, 2006, Elections New Brunswick hosted the 2006 *Conference of Canadian Election Officials* in Fredericton. The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer attended the Conference on behalf of Elections Saskatchewan. Deliberations focused on electoral law reform, young voters and voters-to-be, electoral boundaries, special needs voters, the Electoral Technology Accord, digital signatures, other non-Legislative electoral events, new voting mechanisms and performance measures.

C. CONSULTATIONS WITH ELECTIONS CANADA - NATIONAL REGISTER OF ELECTORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Elections Canada's National Register of Electors Advisory Committee was formed in 1999 to discuss the further development of maintenance of the national permanent voters' registry. The Committee was to provide an ongoing forum for: (i) sharing information to improve the maintenance and use of electronic electoral databases; and (ii) discussing Elections Canada's initiatives for sharing the national registry with provincial and territorial jurisdictions. On behalf of Elections Saskatchewan, the Chief Electoral Officer participated in a Committee meeting on November, 2006 in Ottawa.

D. ELECTORAL TECHNOLOGY ACCORD

In 2003, exploratory meetings were held with participation from most jurisdictions to discuss the possibility of working together to realize some benefits in the form of cost savings and efficiencies in the area of information and communications technology. This resulted in the signing of the Electoral Technology Accord (ETA) by all jurisdictions with the mandate to produce a white paper on the subject.

The white paper, Electoral Technology Accord (Canada), Working Committee Report on the Electoral Technology Accord which was published in 2004 outlined several strategic actions to promote and build a higher degree of collaboration and co-operation among electoral jurisdictions to realize the benefits laid out in the accord.

As a result, the Electoral Technology Accord (ETA) Working Group was established in the Fall of 2004 and began work in early 2005 to define a common data model as the foundation upon which future electoral systems might be built and more-easily shared among members of the accord.

The common data model has grown from basic Elector, Address and Event data to include data required by the business areas of Elections Finance and Electoral Geography. It has become a significant shared asset of the ETA.

An operating model was developed to define a structure and a process guiding the work of the ETA and provides a framework for managing the resulting shared assets. The structure begins with a Steering Committee which is made up of all the Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) led by a CEO Sponsor chosen for a recommended term of two years. Participation in the Working Group is voluntary with participants appointed by their CEOs.

Each year the ETA has produced a report outlining the objectives for the year, the results of the work undertaken and a list of recommendations for future work.

The work done either as part of the initiation of the accord or in each year since has been facilitated by a consultant and funded under a few different models. Elections BC funded the initiation work done in 2003/2004, with Elections Ontario, Elections Canada and Elections BC funding the work done for the balance of 2004 through to the Spring of 2006. In 2006/2007, each jurisdiction was asked to contribute what they could afford with the balance being equally divided by Elections Ontario, Elections Canada and Elections BC. In most years, Elections Canada has also provided all the translation, production and distribution services for the materials generated by the ETA.

In July 2006, the Steering Committee accepted the ETA Working Group recommendations and approved the following:

- The ETA Working Group is to begin the work of developing a common training infrastructure by:
 - Meeting with an adult learning consultant to familiarize the Working Group members with the latest concepts in adult learning, general literacy issues and the effective use of technology in adult learning.
 - Reviewing current issues, opportunities and practices in the area of training from a recent study completed for Elections Ontario.
- The Elections Finance sub-committee is to expand the common data model by including the definition of common data for Political Party election filing and Candidate election filing.

-
- A self-moderated group within the Electoral Geography sub-committee be established to begin development of common geography training content.

The work for 2006-2007 was planned to minimize time and travel for meeting and workshop participants because many jurisdictions had electoral events planned.

In addition to several teleconferences, the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer represented Elections Saskatchewan as its member of the Working Group of the Electoral Technology Accord in meetings in Edmonton (April 2007). Through various teleconferences the Manager of Election Finances and the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer represented the Office on the Elections Finance subcommittee and the Manager of Elections Operations and Communications and Assistant Chief Electoral Office represented the Office on the Electoral Geography Subcommittee.

The work of the ETA is strengthening the sharing culture among the jurisdictions participating in the accord. The meetings and workshops have increased awareness of the vast bank of knowledge and resources that exists within the jurisdictions. The cooperative atmosphere created by the ETA has built a forward-thinking environment that encourages co-operation and sharing of resources among electoral jurisdictions. There are many examples of shared knowledge and resources including the Elections Saskatchewan Permanent Register of Eligible Electors (ESPREE) application which is based on the Alberta Register Of Eligible Electors (AROES) software (an update outlined in the strategic initiatives section of this report).

The 2006-2007 Annual Working Group Report presents the results of the work of the Electoral Technology Accord (ETA) Working Group from the Fall of 2006 to the Spring of 2007.

In addition, the report presents:

- A three year plan for consideration by the Steering Committee which recommends work to be done by the Working Group and sub-committees for specialized subject areas; and
- A specific plan for a schedule of meetings and teleconference calls to accomplish the tasks planned to be completed in year one of the three year plan.

The report will be presented at the annual *Conference of Canadian Election Officials* in late July/early August 2007.

E. AROES USERS' GROUP

Following the Spring ETA Working Group Meeting in Edmonton, Elections Alberta hosted a two day meeting of the AROES Users' Group. Representatives from Elections NWT, Elections Nunavut, Elections Saskatchewan and Elections Alberta met to discuss the evolution of, recent experiences with, and give demonstrations of, their individual systems. AROES is the application from which ESPREE is derived. (Elections Nunavut and Elections Northwest Territories also have software

derived from AROES). Key innovations, best practices and future plans for development were also shared amongst participants. All agreed that the meeting was valuable for the exchange of ideas and further meetings of the AROES Users' Group will be scheduled in the future. The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer represented the Office at this meeting.

F. EDUCATIONAL LIAISON

The Chief Electoral Officer gave presentations to the Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute in April 2006. In October Dave Wilkie, the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer attended *Voice the Vision of Youth* in Prince Albert. It was an all evening event where youth in the community were encouraged to think about the future. Numerous organizations working with youth or having an interest with youth were represented. Dave, and a Prince Albert returning officer, set up a booth at this event and met a large number of youth, many of whom were Aboriginal, as well as persons working with youth. A student voting brochure was developed to coincide with the attendance at this event.

G. ONGOING LIAISON

Throughout the reporting period, the Office has received valuable assistance from all Canadian federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions while researching best practices in other jurisdictions. The Spring of 2004 brought the launch of the Canadian Election Resource Library (CERL). This on-line extranet resource is based at the offices of Elections Manitoba. A nominal annual subscription fee from the various electoral offices across the country subsidizes the coordinator's salary and benefits. CERL members may interact with other CERL members by replying to messages or by starting their own message thread. CERL members may also view on-line forms, legislation, manuals/guides, policies and reports from other jurisdictions across the country.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS – AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTION ACT, 1996

Major changes were made to *The Election Act* in 1996, which were proclaimed on March 22, 2006. As stated in *The Annual Report Compendium 2003-2005 and the Annual Report of 2005-2006*, the advent of the regularization of the Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on a fiscal year basis brings the opportunity for the Chief Electoral Officer to make Recommendations on Amendments to *The Election Act* on a regular basis.

A. NEW RECOMMENDATIONS SINCE THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL REPORT (2005-2006)

1. TRANSFER CERTIFICATES FOR POLLING PLACES THAT LACK ACCESS

Background: Returning officers try to locate their polling stations in polling places that are accessible. In some locations despite the best efforts of the returning officer no accessible locations are available. This amendment would allow the voter to go to the next closest polling place that was accessible. Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario have similar provisions in their legislation.

While some jurisdictions have a time limit, to have any time limit undermines the reason for it (i.e. may not discover that polling place is not accessible until they arrive on polling day).

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996*, be amended to allow for transfer certificates for electors with a disability whose polling place does not have level access.

2. TRANSFER CERTIFICATES FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS AND PARTY VOLUNTEERS

Background: Deputy returning officers, poll clerks, other election officials and the scrutineers of candidates are encouraged to vote in advance polls. There are however occasions when replacement officials and newly signed up scrutineers effectively lose their right to vote because of their desire to play an active role by working at or volunteering at a polling place on Election Day. Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario have similar provisions in their legislation.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996*, be amended to allow for transfer certificates for election officials and party volunteers.

3. ADDITIONAL REASON FOR TRANSFER CERTIFICATES

Background: In general the percentage of voter turn out is decreasing over time. Every election there are instances where a returning officer may have had to change a polling place due to unforeseen circumstances. In some cases there is confusion and the elector may go to the wrong polling place. In disgust and frustration the elector may abandon their attempt at voting.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended to allow for transfer certificates for any elector who presents himself or herself at the wrong polling station as the result of a change in the assignment of polling stations or advance polls that took place after the issuance of the original voter information card to the elector.

4. DATE OF RESIDENCY [SUBSECTION 16 (C) (I)]

Background: Over the course of the past several elections there have been some complaints about the fact eligible electors must vote in the polling division in which they live on the day that the writ was issued. Other electoral jurisdictions use the location where you are during enumeration to determine where you will vote. Others use the location you will be living on Election Day to determine the polling division and constituency where you will be voting.

Alternatively a transfer certificate could be issued to those individuals who move between the date of the writ and a date prior to Election Day.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be reviewed with the intention of making revisions to subsection 16 (c)(i) with respect to the date of residency.

5. DROP OCCUPATION AND REPLACE WITH BIRTH DATE AND GENDER ON LIST OF ELECTORS [SUBSECTION 24(2)]

Background: Currently Saskatchewan is the only provincial, territorial, federal jurisdiction to still ask for occupation on its List of Electors. The most recent jurisdiction to stop including "occupation" on its List of Electors was Prince Edward Island. Elections P.E.I. has not asked for "Occupation" or used "Occupation" for any elections since early 2003 for reasons of privacy. Instead the elector's date of birth is asked for.

(The reference to "Occupation" remains in Prince Edward Island's Election Act in error and will be removed soon in the next set of amendments).

In the event of a Permanent List of Electors it would be impossible to keep occupation updated from election to election. Many persons change occupations over time and there is no way of capturing this change.

Returning officers are receiving more and more complaints about the issue of privacy and the asking of occupation by enumerators and the inclusion on the List of Electors. Initially it was members of police services or correctional services that were complaining about being asked their occupation and were refusing. The complaints about being asked for occupation are now becoming more widespread across the province as privacy becomes more of an important issue to the general public.

Most provincial, territorial, federal jurisdictions across the country ask for birth date and gender on their List of Electors. Birth date is recognized as the best way of identification and matching for those jurisdictions that have a Permanent List of Electors. As the Premier's All Party Committee recommended the introduction of a Permanent List of Electors in its November 2004 Report and the Minister of Justice at the time of second reading the Minister of Justice stated in the Legislative Assembly that "The prospect of **developing a permanent electronic voter's list** is one of the most significant recommendations of the committee".

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended to drop all references to occupation on the List of Electors and that instead the elector's birth date and gender be included on the List of Electors.

6. DROP OCCUPATION ON THE BALLOT (THE ELECTION ACT REGULATIONS – APPENDIX)

Background: In recommendation #5 above it was recommended that occupation be deleted from the List of Electors. Similarly most provincial, territorial, federal jurisdictions across the country have dropped the listing of candidates occupation from the ballot.

The occasion of dropping the occupation from the ballot would be a good opportunity to increase print size on the ballot recognizing the aging population of the Province.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended to drop all references to occupation on the ballot and to increase the point size of the printing on the ballot.

7. HOMEBOUND VOTING

Background: There are some individuals who are not well enough to either go to an advance or regular polling place or to go a local store to photocopy their identification which is needed to apply to be an absentee voter. With advances in health care there are more individuals with disabilities living in their homes for longer periods of time. Sometimes the caregivers of such individuals are also similarly not able to leave the loved one that they are caring for. An election official could personally deliver the homebound voting package.

Manitoba has had legislation for homebound voting for many years. Recently the legislation was expanded to include caregivers.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996*, be amended to include provisions for "Homebound Voting" to allow a person to vote at home if he or she is unable to go in person to a polling place due to a disability or he or she is providing care to a person who is unable to leave home.

8. AUDIT SUBSIDY FOR REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY'S FISCAL RETURNS [SECTION 250]

Background: In subsection 267(3) there is a provision for reimbursement of auditing expenses for a registered political party election expenses return. "The amount of auditing expenses that a registered political party is eligible to be reimbursed for is the lesser of: (a) the adjusted amount of \$2,000; and (b) the amount actually charged by the auditor." For some smaller registered political parties the expense of auditing the registered political party annual return is a hardship. In the spirit of *The Charter of Rights* and the goal of a level playing field for all registered political parties the above hardship be removed by expanding the audit subsidy to annual returns.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended to include a provision for a subsidy of auditing expenses for registered political party annual expense returns.

9. EMERGENCY PROVISIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTION CLERK [SECTION 9]

Background: While every effort should be made to recruit and hire eligible voters who reside in the constituency for the positions of returning officer and election clerk there may be emergency situations where no qualified individual may be found on short notice. Legislation in British Columbia and Quebec allows for a returning officer to be appointed from an adjoining constituency. The legislation in Manitoba allows for an exception to the residency rule "where an appointment must be made in an emergency or another special circumstance".

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended to include an emergency provision for the returning officer or election clerk to be appointed from outside the constituency.

10. EMERGENCY PROVISIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF ELECTION OFFICIALS [SECTION 10, 13, 20 & 37]

Background: While every effort should be made to find suitable eligible voters in the constituency to appoint as election officers there may be emergency situations where no qualified individual may be found on short notice. The legislation in Manitoba allows for the Chief Electoral Officer to authorize the appointment of eligible electors from outside the constituency.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended to include an emergency provision for the Chief Electoral Officer, in writing, to authorize the appointment of eligible voters from outside the constituency.

11. CHANGE OF TERM [VARIOUS SECTIONS]

Background: Over the course of the past several elections the role of the election clerk has changed from simply a clerk or secretarial role to that of assisting the returning officer to carry

out their expanded role. A number of jurisdictions have recognized this important change in responsibilities by changing the term "election clerk" to "assistant returning officer" in all references in the legislation.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended to change the term "election clerk" to "assistant returning officer" in any and all instances.

B. REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS ANNUAL REPORTS

(Repeated below with any appropriate updates in ***bolded italics***)

1. EXEMPTION OF MOBILE POLLS, ADVANCE POLLS AND HOSPITAL POLLS FROM IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS [SUBSECTION 71(1)]

Background: As part of the provisions streamlining absentee voting, the requirement for having another resident voter in the same constituency, who was not related, sign both the absentee voter application form and the certificate envelope containing the ballot to be returned to the returning office was deleted. Instead the absentee voter is asked to sign a declaration and provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence with their application form. Similarly all persons required to make a declaration must provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. This has led to anomalies whereby a voter in a moving poll or advance poll, who is on the Voter's List would be asked to sign a declaration and provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. It also should be clarified in legislation that eligible voters who are in hospitals, remand centres or temporarily displaced polls on Election Day should not have to provide satisfactory proof of voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. Persons in hospitals, remand centres and temporarily displaced polls normally do not have identification with them, therefore making the oath/declaration on the certificate envelope should be sufficient. The following recommendation is as a result of the experience of implementing the amendments, which were proclaimed March 22, 2006 and the practical experience of the Weyburn-Big Muddy and Martensville by-elections.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended to clarify that, persons living in a mobile poll or voting at an advance poll who are on the Voters' List not be required to provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. These voters should be like any other voters whose names are on the Voters' List and who are not required to produce identification. Similarly, that *The Election Act, 1996*, be amended to clarify that, persons who are in a hospital on Election Day not be required to provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. Voters in hospitals have never been required to produce identification, as it is not realistic to expect that the person in hospital will

have access to the necessary identification. The amendments, proclaimed March 22, 2006, may have inadvertently suggested that hospital voters, who are required to take a declaration on the certificate envelope, also need to provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. This should not be the case.

2. REVIEW OF THE ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTION PROVISIONS OF THE ELECTION ACT, 1996

Background: While the initial recommendation on whether to or not to prosecute alleged offences of *The Election Act, 1996* lies with the Chief Electoral Officer, the final decision on whether to prosecute rests with the provincial Department of Justice and ultimately with the Minister of Justice. Herein lies an obvious potential conflict of interest should the individual who allegedly perpetrated the offence be a fellow candidate, caucus or cabinet colleague of the Minister of Justice. Across the country there are two distinct variations on the Minister of Justice deciding on whether or not to prosecute for alleged violations. In Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Yukon and Northwest Territories the decision on whether or not to prosecute rests with the Chief Electoral Officer. In Canada and Nunavut it is the decision of a commissioner on whether or not to initiate prosecution (Canada-Commissioner of Canada Elections and Nunavut-Integrity Commissioner). In Manitoba, it has long been the responsibility of the Chief Electoral Officer on whether to initiate prosecution. In recent amendments to *The Elections Act* of Manitoba, it has become the responsibility of a commissioner to decide on whether or not any prosecutions should be initiated.

For some minor alleged offences it is debatable whether the public interest will be served by attempting to prosecute the individual. Since 2000 the *Canada Election Act* has made reference to compliance agreements. In Elections Canada's case, a compliance agreement is a voluntary agreement between the Commissioner and the person (the contracting party) in which they agree to terms and conditions that the Commissioner considers necessary to ensure compliance with the *Canada Election Act*. A compliance agreement may include a statement by the contracting party in which he or she admits responsibility for the act or omission that constitutes the offence. It is important to note that the admission of responsibility does not constitute a criminal conviction by a Court of law and does not create a criminal record for the contracting party. In order to maintain transparency, a notice that sets out the contracting party's name, or omission in question and a summary of the compliance agreement is made public in the *Canada Gazette* and on the Elections Canada Web site.

In the past, some candidates and political parties have been very slow in returning their candidate returns and their registered political party returns. In addition there may also be delays in responding to the Office's request for additional information for candidate returns or registered political party returns. The possibility of issuing administrative fines, to be subtracted off any balance owing to the candidate or registered political party, may be an efficient way to

underline the importance of prompt responses to requests for information while minimizing the interest liability for this Office when it takes more than 90 days to process the return.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be reviewed with the intent to amend provisions pertaining to: the enforcement of provisions of *The Election Act, 1996*, initiation of prosecution for alleged violations of *The Election Act, 1996*, allowing for compliance agreements and allowing for administrative fines for failure to submit returns on time or failure to respond to request for information in a timely manner.

3. NOMINATION PAPER AND NAME ON BALLOT PAPER [CLAUSE 35(3)(A) AND SUBSECTION 44(6)]

Background: Currently subsection 44(6)(a) of *The Election Act, 1996*, indicates that "The nomination paper must state: the name... of the candidate ..." and subsection 35(3)(a) states that "Every returning officer shall cause a printer to print on each ballot paper the names ... of the candidates as set out in the nomination papers ...". In the past few months the Office of the CEO has had occasion to consider whether the term "name" is detailed enough. The determination of "last" or "family" name has been affected by the breaking up of relationships, the creation of new relationships, and how possible name changes including the hyphenation of last names may informally or formally result in the change of last names.

It has been the practice of the Office of the CEO to allow any contraction, abbreviation or nickname to be indicated, to be used on the ballot. The legislation in Manitoba formalizes the option of using an abbreviation or nickname.

Recommendation: That the term "name" or "names" be changed to "legal name" or "legal names" and additionally that "the individual must indicate the name, or any contraction or abbreviation of his or her name, or nickname, that he or she wishes to be used on the ballot papers in the election".

4. ADVANCE POLLING – CENTRAL URBAN LOCATIONS [SECTION 129]

Background: The falling voter turnout at elections of all levels is a concern. The falling level of young voters (age 18 to 25 year olds) is even more alarming. New approaches and ideas to increase voter turnout should be explored. A recent research study on low voter turnout in Manitoba, prepared for Elections Manitoba and presented at the 2004 *Canadian Election Official Conference*, noted that 63% of non-voters are "irregular voters". These voters will vote when circumstances allow. They planned on voting but other things got in the way. One way of increasing voter turnout, especially among "irregular voters" may be to bring the advance polls to the voters, or in other words bring the advance polls where voters already congregate such as in shopping malls. Centralized advance polls in the cities of Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon (and perhaps other cities) would serve not only the constituencies in the

area surrounding each city but may also serve, for example, voters from other parts of the province who are visiting family members in the city who had not thought of applying for absentee voting, or whose plans had changed suddenly, and also employees who find themselves working outside their constituency of residence. A permanent list of electors would enable the poll officials in the central advance poll to check to see if the elector is on the List of Electors and if so the poll official would give the elector a ballot and indicate on the List of Electors that the elector has voted. In this way, for example, the young adults from across the city who are visiting the malls in Regina; the individual from La Ronge who is sent to attend a week-long training session in Saskatoon a week before the election; the couple from Gravelbourg doing their shopping at the mall in Moose Jaw would all be able to vote at the central advance poll even though that advance poll is not located in their constituency. The Province of British Columbia has a similar process that works well. The central advance poll locations would not be set up as an alternative to having at least one advance poll location in each constituency but rather as an additional alternative. Manitoba legislation now allows for residents of the constituency, and non-residents of the constituency, who are eligible voters, to vote at a central advance polling place to convenience voters and as a possible way to increase voter turn-out.

Update: The recent Manitoba election in May 2007 was the first occasion to use this new provision. The voter turnout at advance polls doubled and the top two advance poll voting locations in terms of number of voters were a major suburban shopping mall in Winnipeg and the Winnipeg International Airport. This was a very popular change for voters a number of whom may not have otherwise voted.

Recommendation: That central advance polling locations be allowed to set up to service eligible voters from anywhere in the province.

5. ADVANCE VOTING IN RETURNING OFFICES [SECTION 129]

Background: A number of other electoral jurisdictions in Canada (Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario and New Brunswick) have advance polls located in Office of the returning officer. With a Permanent List of Electors on the horizon it is important to make voting as simple as possible. "A One Stop Shopping" concept where an individual can be added to the List of Electors and then vote at the same time in the same location would be advantageous and may increase voter turnout. In the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election the deadline for receipt of absentee ballots was Sunday, June 11, eight days before Election Day. The advance polls began on Tuesday, June 13, six days before Election Day. Some persons came into the returning office on Monday, June 12 wanting to vote but were unable to do so because they were caught in between the absentee application deadline and the beginning of the advance polls. Anyone leaving the constituency on Monday, June 12, Tuesday, June 13, or before 3:00 p.m. on June 14 was without a voting opportunity. Advance polls in the returning office starting earlier in the election calendar would alleviate this shortfall.

Update: *There were several similar instances in the recent Martensville by-election.*

Recommendation: That advance polls be set up in the office of the returning officer starting earlier in the electoral calendar.

6. ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Background: The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer established the first all-party Electoral Advisory Committee in the Fall of 2001. The Advisory Committee was formed to give registered political party representatives the opportunity to advise on the administration of *The Election Act, 1996* and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, with a particular emphasis on the future needs of Saskatchewan's electorate and political stakeholders. The inaugural meeting was well received by all attending and was very useful in getting feedback for the administration of *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. Some jurisdictions have the composition set in legislation such as Manitoba's Advisory Committees as set out in *Manitoba's Elections Act* and *Elections Finances Act* and Québec's Advisory Committee set out in *Québec's Election Act*. The committee met twice in the past year, once in November 2005 to discuss the Strategic Plan 2005-2011 and the then pending amendments to *The Election Act, 1996* and once in April 2006 to discuss preparations for the pending by-election in Weyburn-Big Muddy. It is our intention to fully utilize this vehicle for communication more regularly than in the past. The Office has already announced another meeting following the current ongoing Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election.

Update: *The committee met in November 2006 (see Liaison section of this report for more details).*

Recommendation: That an electoral advisory committee be mandated under *The Elections Act, 1996*.

7. LEAVE FROM EMPLOYMENT FOR RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTION CLERKS

Background: *The Chief Electoral Officer now appoints returning officers.* The responsibilities of the returning officer are becoming more demanding, particularly with respect to computerization and technology. In Manitoba where returning officers are also appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer, the legislation allows for leave without pay without penalty for a number of individuals including returning officers and their assistants during the course of an election campaign. A provision for an employer to request an exemption if the leave would be deemed to seriously detrimental to the employer is also included. In the period leading up to the 2003 general election in Manitoba, 30 returning officers and assistant returning officers applied for leave of absence without pay. Of these only two employers appealed to the Manitoba Labour Board, both of which were allowed. The leave of absence provisions allowed a number of professionals including a mixture of teachers, provincial and federal public service employees and private sector employees in various fields to become returning officers and assistant returning officers. Ontario and Québec have similar leave provisions for returning officers and other election officers.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996*, be amended to include provisions for a leave of absence without pay and without penalty for returning officers and election clerks during the election period.

8. POSSIBLE EXTENSION FOR THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF THE REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY'S ANNUAL RETURNS [SECTION 250]

Background: Currently the Chief Electoral Officer has no flexibility to extend the deadline for the submission of the registered political party annual returns. On occasion personal circumstances may prevent the submission of the return on time. There should be flexibility for the Chief Electoral Officer to extend the deadline for valid reason.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996* be amended to allow for the Chief Electoral Officer to grant an extension for the deadline for submission of annual registered political party returns if the Chief Electoral Officer is satisfied that the registered political party has a valid reason for the request.

2006-2007 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND NOTES

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2006-2007	2005-2006
<u>Financial Assets</u>		
Transfer Due from the General Revenue Fund	\$170,159	\$ 22,516
<u>Liabilities</u>		
Accounts payable (includes Martensville payable)	158,682	11,995
Accrued vacation pay	11,477	10,521
SubTotal	<u>170,159</u>	<u>22,516</u>
Net Debt	-	-
<u>Non-financial Assets:</u>		
Tangible capital assets (NOTE 3)	16,992	7,188
Prepaid expenses	-	-
SubTotal	<u>16,992</u>	<u>7,188</u>
Accumulated Surplus	<u>\$16,992</u>	<u>\$ 7,188</u>

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2006-2007	2005-2006	
Revenue:	Budget (NOTE 4)	Actual (NOTE 5)	Actual
Transfer from the General Revenue Fund:	\$ 807,000	\$ 773,294	\$ 808,967
Miscellaneous Income	-	-	-
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 807,000</u>	<u>\$ 773,294</u>	<u>\$ 808,967</u>
Expenses:			
Personal Services	529,202	483,192	402,048
Contractual Services	193,161	238,855	300,457
Advertising	32,500	10,419	55,653
Travel and Business	25,186	17,511	30,390
Supplies and Services	9,450	4,107	16,023
Amortization	-	9,404	3,477
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 789,499</u>	<u>\$ 763,488</u>	<u>\$ 808,048</u>
Surplus/Deficit	<u>\$ 17,501</u>	<u>\$ 9,804</u>	<u>\$ 919</u>
Accumulated Surplus beginning of year		7,188	6,269
Accumulated Surplus End of Year		<u>\$ 16,992</u>	<u>\$ 7,188</u>

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET DEBT
AS AT MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2006-2007	2005-2006
Annual Surplus	\$ 9,804	919
Acquisition of capital assets	(19,208)	(4,396)
Amortization of capital assets	9,404	3,477
	<u>(9,804)</u>	<u>(919)</u>
Use of a prepaid expense	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
(Increase) in Net Debt	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net debt, beginning of year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net debt, end of year	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2006-2007	2005-2006
	(NOTE 5)	
Operating:		
Cash received from:		
Transfer from the General Revenue Fund:	\$ 773,294	\$ 808,967
Miscellaneous Income	-	-
Total Cash Received	<u>773,294</u>	<u>808,967</u>
Cash paid for:		
Personal Services	483,192	402,048
Contractual Services	238,855	300,457
Advertising	10,419	55,653
Travel and Business	17,511	30,390
Supplies and Services	4,107	16,023
Equipment	-	-
Total Cash Paid Out	<u>754,084</u>	<u>804,571</u>
Cash Provided by Operating Transactions	<u>19,208</u>	<u>4,396</u>
Capital:		
Cash to acquire capital assets	19,208	(4,396)
Cash Applied to Capital Transactions	<u>19,208</u>	<u>(4,396)</u>
Increase (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2007

1. Authority and Purpose

The Chief Electoral Officer is an officer of the Legislative Assembly and is appointed by resolution. The mandate of the Office is to administer provincial elections, enumerations other than during an election, and provincial election finances under *The Election Act, 1996*. The Office maintains the province's political contributions tax credit disclosure regime under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001*, and administers referenda, plebiscites and time votes according to *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act* and *The Time Act*.

2. Summary of Accounting Policies

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer used Canadian GAAP in the preparation of these financial statements. Significant accounting policies are described below:

- (a) **Basis of Accounting** - The financial statements are prepared using the expense basis of accounting.
- (b) **Revenue** - The Office receives statutory transfers from the General Revenue Fund to carry out required duties.
- (c) **Capital Assets** - Tangible capital assets are reported at cost less accumulated amortization. All capital assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over three to five years.
- (d) **Accrued Vacation Pay Liability** - Vacation entitlements earned but not taken are recorded as a liability.

3. Capital Assets

CATEGORY	CUMULATIVE COMPARISON					
	2006-2007			2005 - 2006		
	ORIGINAL COST	ACCUMULATED AMORTIZATION	NET BOOK VALUE	ORIGINAL COST	ACCUMULATED AMORTIZATION	NET BOOK VALUE
Computer Equipment	\$61,635	\$49,650	\$11,985	\$44,086	\$43,241	\$845
Office Equipment	7,472	4,614	2,858	6,373	3,624	2,749
Furniture	10,478	8,329	2,149	9,918	6,324	3,594
Total	\$79,585	\$62,593	\$16,992	\$60,377	\$53,189	\$7,188

- 4. Budget Figures** - These are amounts presented annually to the Board of Internal Economy for the Office to carry out duties under *The Election Act, 1996*.

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5. **Total Expense Figures** - The figures presented only include normal non-election expenses. The cost of the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election (\$234,127) and the Martensville by-election (\$273,830) would bring total expenditures to \$1,281,251 for the year. The final cost of the Martensville by-election has been estimated as final costs will not be known until the Fall of 2007.
 6. **Costs Borne by Third Party Agencies** - During the year the Office received certain administrative services from the Department of Finance and the Legislative Assembly without charge. No provision for these costs has been made in these statements.